

Newsletter for Birdwatchers

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Editorial

Looking back

I take it that all our readers know that I wish them happiness and prosperity in the months to come. Perhaps it is worthwhile looking over our shoulders, and having a glance at the events and articles of the past year through the six issues of our Newsletter. Looking back over the road travelled is a good way of starting on a fresh journey.

We have fortunately now on hand a set of contributors who can be expected to keep us well supplied with articles and notes. I cannot list all of them but a few names stand out : K.S. Lavkumar,

V Santharam, Snehal Patel, Aasheesh Pittie, Lt. Gen. Baljit Singh, Anish Andheria, Ameen Ahmad, Daniel Wesley, Aamir Ali and A J Urfi. I repeat, this list is illustrative, not comprehensive.

There has been a fresh influx of writers, an important asset for a publication. Satish Pande and his colleagues from Pune have supplied very impressive material and won the \$500 William Selover Grant for their project on the swiftlets of Vengurla. Their expeditions to the forbidding Vengurla Rocks far from the coast in the Arabian sea, and subsequent attempts to save the edible nest swiftlets from damage, was applauded widely, even by the difficult Maneka Gandhi, because they involved citizens and officials alike in playing appropriate roles. The willingness of the Coast Guards to join in the conservation effort is likely to be of lasting benefit to the birds. B. Narayan Deb's article on whistling teals in the last issue of the year was a lovely example of man assisting lesser creatures without in any way interfering with essential natural processes. The objections raised in an earlier case about transferring eggs from the nests of cisticolas to prinias does not apply to the efforts involved in saving the whistlers which had chosen on their own to nest on the roof of a building.

We are all happy that S. Rangaswami, founder of the Institute of Bird Studies and Natural History at Rishi Valley and the creator of the imaginative Home Study Course in Ornithology, has been honoured by the conferment of Sanctuary-ABN-AMRO Green Teacher Award 2001. It is not only in the class room that he is a success. The greenery in Rishi Valley owes much to him.

But all the greenery of the world will go if the war clouds now looming on the horizon develop into a nuclear holocaust. One can only hope that the proposal to convert Siachin into a Peace Park, reported in the July / August issue will be accepted and prove to be the first step in diffusing tension between India and Pakistan, and of course save the glorious snow-clad peaks of the Himalayas (the provider of water to our plains) from the pollution which war-mongering involves.

Common and Scientific names

Except in the case of the commonest birds (crows and sparrows) please mention the scientific names as well, and also indicate whether you are alluding to the older books (Whistler, Salim Ali, Stuart Baker, etc.) or the recent ones (Grimmett Inskipp, Inskipp and others). In the excellent article by V. Santharam on the birds of Garhwal, several new names (White-throated laughing thrush, sooty flycatchers) are difficult to connect with familiar literature when the common names too have been changed. Kiran Purandare and K.S. Lavkumar have been very helpful by referring to the older names as well. K.S. Lavkumar, who writes pains-takingly with his ancient (No.9?) nib dipped into Camel ink is requested to use capitals for bird names. The Crimson sunbird would have appeared as Gimson sunbird if the computer operator had her way.

Review

In his foreword to Prakash Gole's 'Nature Conservation and Sustainable Development in India' (Rawat Publications, 197 pp. Rs. 395/-) Anil Agarwal, the genius who made even politicians sit up and take note of the value of the natural environment, says: "The Ministry of Environment and Forests largely acts as a protector of the environment but not as an agency which ensures that the works of other ministries, which undertake agricultural,

economic, rural or urban developments, integrate environment with their activities. As a result, only the civil society is left to ensure that this objective is operationalized. It also means that an activist like Prakash Gole has to play a key role to ensure environmentally-sound economic development across the board."

The implication is that the Ministry of Environment has not played its part in saving our natural environment. Many years ago, Indira Gandhi set up a Committee to make recommendations for setting up an organization which would ensure the protection of the natural environment. One of the suggestions of the Committee was that each Ministry should have an Environmental Advisor just as it has a Financial Advisor. In the absence of such an arrangement, the Ministries have been proceeding on their own with their projects without taking the environmental aspects into account. By the time they ask for advice, it is usually too late.

It is therefore left to people like Gole (a species which is very rare) to ensure that our physical environment is not unnecessarily damaged by development. One of the very important things which Gole is doing is to give lessons in ecology to the irrigation officers of the Maharashtra Government. This is of course crucial since water is going to be one of the main problems of the future.

One positive characteristic of Gole's work and writing is the absence of ambiguity. For instance, he is clear in his approach that National Parks and Sanctuaries should be left entirely to nature. He has emphasized in his earlier writings that protected areas occupy only 4% of India's land, and that it is the duty of the other 96% to look after the tribals and others who may be displaced in the cause of conservation. He seems to be confident that this can be done if we decide on a "nation-wide labour-intensive, employment-oriented and decentralized scheme of restoration of nature based on people's participation."

In the chapter on Environmental Economics, the author makes a remark which is worth pondering over. "Only plants have the ability to produce a surplus by using the energy of the sun without any apparent costs". In everything else, increasing production from finite resources results in an unsustainable position in the course of time".

The chapters relating to water management are of particular interest at the present time when it is clear to everyone that the shortage of water is going to be one of the most serious problems of the coming decades. By a careful study of the ecology of streams and rivers, he suggests that the appropriate rehabilitation of catchments and the banks of water courses throughout their length would result in the perennial flow of streams which now dry up in summer. This would have the added advantage of our not having to resort to large dams which result in the submergence of valuable forests and arable land.

In his surveys, Gole has often relied on birds to act as pointers to ecological conditions. In the Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary he has listed 171 species out of which 34 are forest-based. Among them are several endemic or restricted-range species such as the Nilgiri wood pigeon, white-cheeked barbet, Malabar lark, yellow-browed bulbul, white-bellied blue flycatcher and Malabar whistling thrush. These birds only survive in evergreen forests, so that is an added reason why these forests should be protected to the full. Similarly, there are species very dependent on deciduous forests, and others which exist in other ecological niches. Birds in fact confirm to us again, if such confirmation is needed, that the full range of ecological niches has to be protected, if nature has to perform effectively and to remain a life-support system for us and for other lesser creatures.

Gole's writings are always incisive. I hope administrators will read and absorb this book.



Regeneration of Pambar Shola (Kodaikanal)

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We have been engaged in a long-term project to conserve and restore the Pambar Shola and its environs near Kodaikanal for some 15 years. The Shola's recovery under the stewardship of the local people, particularly Vattakanal Organisation for Youth, Community and Environment (VOYCE), is quite remarkable. This process received a boost when the Forest Department approved regeneration cum research programme for the degraded margins of the Shola. As conservationists our vocation is more in the field of botany than ornithology, but imagine a forest without birds! Bird watching has been an enjoyable sideline to our work and we have tried to be "good" at it, but our amateurishness was underlined in March when Alan Morley, with a lifetime of experience, added 16 species in 3 days to our list of 57 noted over a period of 16 years. His additions demonstrated to us what an important bird habitat our locality is, consisting of Sholas, grasslands, orchards, cottage gardens and soaring cliffs all at 2000m (approx.).

The importance was further underlined by the World Red Data list which included the Nilgiri wood pigeon, Nilgiri flycatcher, and the white-bellied shortwing, all of which can be found in and around

the Pambar Shola. The white-bellied shortwing in particular has been something of an enigma to us since Eric Lott, Rev. ret'd. gave us a photo of the bird in 1997 to make postcards. Although the photo was taken in the Pambar Shola, we had not seen this bird until July this year. We were mapping a path through the Shola, an area very close to our village of Vattakanal. This area was heavily exploited in the past, but is now self-regenerating. It gave us great pleasure to see this elusive bird among such verdant circumstances, in a spot that was once the scene of routine destruction.

Other red-listed birds of the Shola have been frequent visitors to the centre of the village since tree planting began in earnest in 1991. They include the Nilgiri verditer flycatcher, and less frequently the black and orange flycatcher. We were surprised to see Jerdon's laughing thrush listed as "near threatened" as it is so ubiquitous in the gardens and orchards of the village, which it seems to prefer to its native place in the Shola where it is more usually heard than seen. Earlier in the year one pair raised a brood in the dense cover of our Shola saplings in their plastic bags, right next to a busy bagging area. Two others of our "red

data" birds have so far not made an appearance in the nursery. The Nilgiri wood pigeon keeps to the deep shade beneath the Shola canopy, while the broad-tailed grassbird keeps to the tall grasslands below the village. Other forest birds which are frequent visitors since 1996 are the velvet fronted nuthatch which comes in small parties, accompanied by the black-lored tit; they spend several minutes cleaning the branches of our Avocado tree before moving on. Probably our favourite visitor from the Shola is the Malabar whistling thrush, which is almost pet-like in its tameness. Once it entered the cottage and perched on the T.V. Other forest visitors include the Indian golden backed three-toed woodpecker, the Besra sparrow-hawk and only this year the scarlet and ashy minivets.

Conservation Status

The conservation status of the area is somewhat uneven. The village of Vattakanal lies in the centre of a rich mosaic of habitats stretching from Kodaikanal lake to Pillar rocks and extends down the slope of the mountain to Shembagnur to the North east and extensive grasslands, which stretch toward Vellegevi in the mid-hills. The grasslands, home to the threatened broad-tailed grassbird, are of particular concern. Very little accessible highland grassland remains in the hills. Unfortunately this area was planted out with a particularly aggressive species of Eucalyptus in 1993 and should be a priority for the Forest department in their endeavour to restore the Palni Hills grasslands. So far not much damage has been done and removal of these still sub-mature trees should be easy. The grassland slopes between Pambar Shola and Shembaganur have recently been recognised as a "Kurinji" reserve, the folklore plant that flowers every twelve years, the best left in the hills according to Fr.K.M. Matthew. The removal of recent Eucalyptus plantings has been agreed to.

Pambar Shola, one of the three major Sholas in the area is now well-defended and only bus loads of tourists and tons of domestic rubbish washed down the Pambar stream remain as obstacles to its complete rehabilitation. A threat from the development of a luxury hotel between it and the lake facing Bombay Shola has receded due to the intervention of the Palni Hills Conservation Council. Bombay Shola itself is fenced but would benefit from some active intervention in the form of tree planting in its denuded areas.

Pambar Shola is already well known as an endemic hot-spot for plants, and the less known Vattakanal Shola, located on the other side of the village, is home to the recent rediscovery of the magnificent Shola tree, *Elaeocarpus blascoi*, thought for many years to be extinct. A probable new species of grassland orchid is also found here. We should also mention that in recent years the village has provided sanctuary to a family of Gaur, *Bos gaurus*, which has now grown to 13 in number. It is only recently that we realised how rich in bird life this relatively small "island" eco-system is, remarkably so, given the proximity to Kodaikanal. Interestingly many of our listed birds generally belong to lower altitudes and we suspect several might represent altitude records for South India. The little grebe at the reservoir at 2236m, the pond heron at 2088m, and the Malabar trogon at 1900m, to name but a few. The cliffs that flank the village probably provide a fast elevator from lower altitudes. Birders wanting to visit the area would also be well rewarded with a day's walk down the mountain to the mango orchards and fields of Periakulam. The walk down

provides a variety of tropical habitats and many more species than our highland list.

Bird list compiled over several years, around Vattakanal Village, 1700m, 2300m, by Bob Stewart and Tanya Balcar with additions from Alan Morley (UK) in March 2001:

Family Podicipitidae

Little grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	Kodaikanal reservoir
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Family : Ardeidae

Pond heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	Kodaikanal lake
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Family : Accipitridae

Blackwinged kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	
Common pariah kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	
Brahminy kite	<i>Haliastur Indus</i>	
Besra sparrow-hawk	<i>Accipiter virgatus</i>	
Black eagle	<i>Ictinaetus malayensis</i>	
Crested serpent eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>	
Peregrine falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	*



Family : Phasianidae

Painted bush quail	<i>Perdica erythrorhyncha</i>	
Red junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>	†see note
Grey junglefowl	<i>Gallus sonneratii</i>	

Family : Turnicidae

Common or Blue legged bustard-quail	<i>Turnix suscitator</i>	*
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Family : Columbidae

Blue rock pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	*
Nilgiri wood pigeon	<i>Columba elphinstonii</i>	vulnerable/ endemic
Rufous turtle dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>	*
Spotted dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	

Family : Cuculidae

Large hawk cuckoo	<i>Hierococcyx sparveroides</i> (Inskipp)	*
Crow pheasant or Coucal	<i>Centropus sinesis</i>	

Lesser coucal

Centropus toulou



Family : Strigidae

Forest eagle-owl	<i>Bubo nipalensis</i>	
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Family : Apodidae

Alpine swift	<i>Apus melba</i>	
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Family : Trogonidae

Southern trogon	<i>Harpactes fasciatus</i>	
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Family : Alcedinidae

Small blue kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Kodaikanal lake
Whitebreasted kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	

Family : UpuipidaeHoopoe *Upupa epops***Family : Capitonidae**Small green barbet *Megalaima viridis*Crimsonthroated barbet *Megalaima rubricapilla***Family : Picidae**Little scalybellied green woodpecker *Picus myrmecophoneus*Lesser goldebacked woodpecker *Dinopium benghalense*Indian goldenbacked threetoed Woodpecker *Dinopium javanense*Heartspotted woodpecker *Hemicircus canente* ***Family : Daniidae**Rufousbacked shrike *Lanius vittatus*Brown shrike *Lanius cristatus* ***Family : Oriolidae**Black drongo or King crow *Dicrurus adsimilis***Family : Sturnidae**Jungle myna *Acridotheres fuscus***Family : Corvidae**Jungle crow *Corvus macrorhynchos***Family : Campephagidae**Ashy minivet *Pericrocotus divaricatus* (Inskipp)Scarlet minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus***Family : Irenidae**Iora *Aegithina tiphia* *Fairy bluebird *Irena puella***Family : Pycnonotidae**Redwhiskered bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus*Redvented bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*Yellowbrowed bulbul *Hypsipetes indicus*Black bulbul *Hypsipetes madagascariensis***Family : Muscicapidae**Slatyheaded scimitar babbler *Pomatorhinus horsfieldii*Whiteheaded babbler *Turdoides affinis* *Jerdon's Laughing thrush *Garrulax jerdoni* near threatened/ endemicBlack -and- orange flycatcher *Muscicapa nigrorufa* near threatened/ endemicWhitebellied blue flycatcher *Muscicapa pallipes* *Tickell's blue flycatcher *Muscicapa tickelliae*Nilgiri verditer flycatcher *Muscicapa albicaudata* near threatened/ endemicGreyheaded flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis*Thickbilled warbler *Acrocephalus aedon* *Dull green Leaf warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* *Tickell's leaf warbler *Phylloscopus affinis* (Inskipp)Broad-tailed Grassbird *Schoenicola platyura* (Inskipp) vulnerable/ endemicMagpie-robin *Copsychus saularis*Pied bush chat *Saxicola caprata*Indian robin *Saxicoloides fulicata*Blue rock thrush *Monticola solitarius*Malabar whistling thrush *Myophonus horsfieldii*White-bellied Shortwing *Brachypteryx major, albiventris* (Inskipp) vulnerable/ endemic.Blackbird *Turdus merula***Family : Paridae**Black-lored tit *Parus xanthogenys* (Inskipp)**Family : Sittidae**Velvetfronted nuthatch *Sitta frontalis***Family : Motacillidae**Grey wagtail *Motacilla cinerea***Family : Dicaeidae**Plaincoloured Flowerpecker *Dicaeum concolor***Family : Nectariniidae**Small sunbird *Nectarinia minime***Family : Zosteropidae**White-eye *Zosterops palpeb***Family : Ploceidae**House sparrow *Passer domesticus***Family : Fringillidae**Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*

* denotes additions by Mr. Alan Morely in March 2001

(Inskipp) denotes where bird is found only in Birds of the Indian Subcontinent by Grimmett, Inskipp and Inskipp 1998.

† Note on Red Junglefowl. This record must be classed as "feral" until further research is done in the area. The colours were all correct for this species and both male and female were seen well. Seen deep down in the Shola and their behaviour was of true wild birds.

Reference:

Salim Ali, The Book of Indian Birds, twelfth revised and enlarged centenary edition.

Grimmett, Inskipp and Inskipp, Birds of the Indian Subcontinent.





Fate of the Velachery-Palikarnai Marsh of Chennai

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What appeared from a distance as flocks of egrets and other white-bellied waders, turned out to be pieces of white packing material (popularly 'thermocool') floating in water. Amidst all the thermocol, plastic, broken glassware and pieces of rubber and the foul smell of domestic sewage emptied by corporation tankers into the water, stood a flock of nearly 1000 birds, shielded by the dense growth of *Typha* reeds. I first witnessed this rather pathetic scene while driving past the Velachery-Palikarnai marsh on October 28, 2001. From the road the largest birds appeared to be glossy ibises. They were indeed glossy ibises, as confirmed later on November 11, 2001, between 250 and 300 of them along with 500-600 black-winged stilts (many more flying in) and about 200 purple moorhen. Other birds in the marsh included a small flock of yellow wagtails, a few large pied wagtails, pied bushchats, white-breasted kingfishers, Indian moorhen, cattle egrets, a pair of marsh harriers, common swallows and red-wattled lapwings. The northeastern end of the marsh, currently being filled up with city wastes, teemed with hundreds of kites, crows and mynas. Around 50 open-billed storks flew overhead.

The Velachery-Palikarnai Marsh (VPM) is extensive but fragmented. Presently the spread during the wet months may easily cover 25-30 square kilometers (2500-3000 ha) - extending south from southern Velachery (Vijayanagar residential area) till Palikarnai and from northern Maxworth nagar in the west to Old Mahabalipuram Road in the east. Link roads laid in the past between Tambaram and Velachery (south-north) and recently between Pallavaram and Old Mahabalipuram Road (west-east) have however divided the entire marsh into 4 unequal segments. The northeastern segment is rapidly being filled up with city wastes followed close on its heels by encroaching slums. The northwestern segment was the first to be reclaimed with waste and debris and has now largely been built up. A major portion of the southeastern segment is walled and taken over by the National Institute of Ocean Technology. The segment in the southwest has deeper water, especially after the rains, and yet has not been spared by development. And with the upcoming Mass Rapid Transport System (MRTS), the pressure on the VPM will only be on the rise!

At present, what lies east of the Velachery-Tambaram road and west of the Old Mahabalipuram is all that is left of this magnificent marsh, over 75% of which is shallow with emergent *Typha* growth.

Patches of grass, water hyacinth and *Pistia* keep shifting with the flow and depth of water during the rains rendering the marsh not only heterogeneous but also dynamic. And if there is any attempt to restore the marsh into a biodiversity conservation area, it has to be within these limits.

About 10 years ago when I first moved into Velachery, I found the VPM clean with much less human interference. Besides the birds listed above, I have seen black bitterns, hundreds of streaked weavers and a handful of warblers sheltering within the *Typha* stands. Even today it is easy to find 10-15 pheasant-tailed jacana in breeding plumage in the marsh. Water that filled the peripheral residential areas of the marsh during years of flood brought with it at least 15 species of fish and offered breeding grounds for 9 species of amphibians. It used to be a delight catching fish with hand-nets just outside my residence and hear the deafening songs of the frogs. Of late, the frogs and toads are vanishing and the fish fauna is predominantly of exotics, the hardy mosquito fish and tilapia.

How exactly the VPM came into being has not been often discussed. Its nature, the water being hard though not salty and geographic orientation, suggest that the marsh was created, long ago, by coastal backwaters and could have extended over twice the present area. Although fed by rain, there might have been some incursion of the sea into the marsh, especially along the eastern margins. It is likely that the construction of the Buckingham Canal, by the British, fully isolated the VPM from the coastal backwaters. Such an interesting ecosystem should not only interest naturalists but also hydrologists and geologists. Unfortunately, despite several agencies, including the Madras Naturalists Society and WWF-India (Tamilnadu State Office in Chennai) raising their voices about the deteriorating VPM, little has been done to restore it. From the ornithologists' point of view, wetlands that support 1% of the biogeographic population of certain species of waterfowl are to be recognized as Important Bird Areas (IBA). According to the BNHS/Birdlife International/ RSPB waterfowl population thresholds, a local population of 500 glossy ibises is adequate to qualify a wetland as an IBA. Sighting 250-300 glossy ibises should therefore be treated as significant, especially because the marsh is rapidly deteriorating, and projected as a case for the long-term management of the VPM.



Birdwatching in the Garhwal Himalayas

V. SANTHARAM, Institute of Bird Studies and Natural History, Rishi Valley 517 352 (AP)

We spent a delightful fortnight up in the Himalayas in the Uttaranchal state last April / May (23 April - 4 May). We were a fairly large group of 22 members consisting of teachers and their families and students in the age group of 12-17 years from the Rishi Valley School, out on a nature camp. We visited three different locations, all very scenic and beautiful.

Our first halt was at Chilla in the Rajaji National Park just across the Ganges from Hardwar. The GMVN guesthouse was comfortable. We spent two days here and explored the place on elephant back and on minibus. We also did a little bit of walking

in and around the Forest Department offices and the canal near the guesthouse. With the onset of summer, the forest wore a dry look. Most of the trees had shed leaves and the undergrowth was sparse. The site was predominantly sal dominated and we also came across a teak plantation. The forest areas were alternating with open areas and dry rocky streambeds. We also encountered several villages and settlements inside the forest, mostly gujar settlements with their cattle. We encountered elephants, sambhar, nilgai, cheetal, common langur, wild boar and jackals besides some 94 species of birds.

One of the interesting birds we saw at the stream next to the guesthouse was the spur winged plover. There were four of them along with redwattled lapwings and other waders (greenshank and green sandpiper) at a pool of water. They appeared to be smaller than their redwattled cousins. I was seeing them for the first time, having missed them on an earlier visit to northern India eight years back. At the Forest Department compound, we located several birds. There was a family of about five chestnut bellied nuthatches, running down the trunk. Beneath a bush that had the Franklin's prinia and the tailorbird, was an olivaceous leaf warbler, foraging on the ground. The greenish brown upper parts, the oily yellow under parts and the bright yellow supercilium were the clear distinguishing features. Not far away was a pair of brown rock chat carrying nesting materials to an old building. There were three or four Alexandrine parakeets calling out loudly from a nearby tree. The calls of the Indian cuckoo and the brain fever bird were often heard.

Under the bridge across the canal, we came across an active nesting colony of the cliff swallow – over 60 nests could be counted and there were easily over 150 birds in the vicinity. Walking slowly and quietly over the bridge, we could observe the swallows at close range as they flew just under our feet into their nests. There were a couple of Indian swifts also nesting in the same area, under the bridge. A pair of bank myna was also noticed occupying a hole on the revetment close to the bridge. We noticed few birds of prey in the park. A dozen whitebacked vultures were seen circling and soaring over the guesthouse and on two occasions we noticed scavenger vultures also in flight. An interesting bird seen in the vicinity was the whitethroated spintail swift, of which two individuals were noticed in flight on 24th April. Ospreys were observed on two occasions.

During our forays into the forest we came across several peafowl. The male birds were seen displaying their gorgeous plumage to the females and 'dancing'. It was a sight to be remembered and relished. Red jungle fowls were also quite common along forest roads and paths. I noticed some haircrested drongos in small parties of 3's and 4's. A single emerald dove was seen as it hurriedly flew past. A grey quail was also seen next to the road from the vehicle at a grassy patch. Common grey hornbills were regularly noticed. Among other birds seen include lesser golden backed woodpecker, pygmy woodpecker, rufousbacked shrikes, small minivet, paradise flycatchers, white-eye and Franklin's nightjar.

The next camp was at the famous hill station – Mussoorie - 2000m up in the Himalayas, 35 km from Dehra Dun. We opted to stay away from the town and had our bookings at the Clouds End resort, 6 km from the town. I initially did have some reservation at staying at a tourist place, expecting it to be crowded. But we were in for a surprise – we were the only occupants. The camp was located in an estate, well wooded and with great views of the snow clad peaks (visible only early mornings due to haze) as well as the Doon Valley. The advantage was also that it was close to the Benong Wildlife Sanctuary, just across the valley. This happens to be a tiny piece of forest and grassland area (340 ha.) set-aside for the now extinct mountain quail, said to have been procured in the region between 1846 and 1876. Apart from the mountain quail (whose presence is now doubtful though there have been some recent unverified sight records), barking deer, bharals and occasional leopard and Himalayan black bears are reported in the sanctuary. A tiny shrine perches atop the Benong hill (2100 m), covered partly by Oak forests and

grasslands and rocky cliffs and outcrops. A well-marked path leads to the steep-sided hill and the trek up the hill was well worth it because of the wonderful views it afforded.

Among the very first birds seen at the resort was a flock of over ten whitethroated laughing thrushes. These large birds were common as we found out in subsequent days, seen rummaging in the leaf litter as well as on small trees. They were the least shy and were seen out in the close vicinity of habitations or frequently used roads. I also found a couple of birds carrying nest materials. Another common and conspicuous bird was the dainty little greyheaded flycatcher-warbler. Most of them were in song and actively defending their territories. There were several other warblers, some of which I could not identify. Another bird that caught my attention as we trekked up to the resort was the greywinged blackbird. For a brief while we were fooled by the calls of the jungle crow, which sounded more musical than its plains counterpart. We learnt this was the Himalayan subspecies (*intermedius*). This bird was more aerobatic and often indulged in aerial displays.

A short walk in the late afternoon after tea took us to the western face of the hill which appeared more open and rocky. This was an ideal viewpoint for the raptors and in a short while our list contained seven species - there were five himalayan griffons, a pair of Eurasian hobbies indulging in spectacular dives, kestrel, sparrowhawk (?), a short-toed eagle, a pair of Bonelli's eagles and a black eagle. We saw our first great hill barbet after its curious wailing calls drew our attention. The bird was seen on a low branch of a tree, next to the path and its large yellow bill and dark-coloured head was clearly noticed. A greenbacked tit was foraging on a tree on whose trunk a brown fronted pied woodpecker was pecking for hidden insects. A flock of striated laughing thrushes was briefly seen in the undergrowth. At night we enjoyed the clear sky with several dazzling stars speckled all across, the distant lights of Dehra Dun and the closer lights of Mussoorie. Sometime late at night I heard the musical sounding two-noted calls of the spotted scops owl.

Waking up early in the morning, we watched sunrise and the snow-clad peaks of several hills in the distance as the mist rose over the valleys. A brief walk through the wooded area gave a glimpse of the rich birdlife of the region. A male khali pheasant and two females that scrambled across the path at great speed were the highlights of the morning. Among other species 'bagged' were a lovely pair of small niltava, a small flock of bar-throated siva, a couple of large whiterumped swift with forked tails and white rump patch, a flock of redheaded tits with their distinct facial markings and soft call-notes. In an open patch there was a black partridge, which had earlier attracted our attention with its calls.

The 3 km long hike to the Benong Hill and the Jwalamukhi Temple was an easy one and quite pleasant too. The path took us gradually down the valley and again a climb to the summit initially through the forest and later through the grassy and rocky areas. On the hike we saw the Himalayan pied woodpecker, the Himalayan whistling thrush (one bird seen carrying nest materials), redbilled blue magpie, a lovely specimen of the maroon oriole with its unmistakable plumage, blackthroated and redcrowned jays, black bulbul, a small cuckoo, yellow-cheeked tit and a pair of green pigeon, presumably the orangebreasted. On the grassy slopes of the hill were upland pipits, whose heavily streaked plumage and call-notes made their identification easy. European cuckoos were heard at the top of the hill, calling from

valleys beyond. Griffon vultures floated in and out of the clouds above us. We had a light drizzle followed by sunshine once again.

That evening we spent time exploring the woods once again. It was lovely to see the oaks in tender new leaves, looking colourful in the late evening sunlight. We discovered a nest of the greenbacked tit on a rocky bank along the path, just about 2.5 m above the ground. Even as we stood just a few feet away from the nest, the adult birds continued to feed the young in the nest without any hesitation. Another maroon oriole was seen. Close to dusk we located 5-6 rusty-cheeked scimitar babblers calling their duetting calls from bushes. The calls were distinct – one would call '*kyu-pi*' and the other would go '*quip*'. There were a few sooty flycatchers rather like the familiar brown flycatchers perched atop trees and making sorties in the air. We rounded off our stay at Mussoorie with a visit to Mr. Ruskin Bond's house in the other end of the town. It was an exciting event for all of us, especially the children who were fans of Mr. Bond. We spent an hour or so with this writer whose love for nature is well known, discussing local natural history and about his writings.

Our next destination where we spent most of the time (6 days) in the camp was Chakrata (2100 m), a sleepy hill-station and cantonment area. It took us over four hours to cover the distance of about 80 km. We passed by the Kempty falls, a favourite tourist destination, crowded and dirty, and the Yamuna bridge and large stretches of open terraced cultivation, dry deciduous forests and patches of Rhododendron-oak scrub. There was hardly any dense forest on the route but plenty of signs of landslides and habitat destruction. It was only at Chakrata that we noticed forests again. We again preferred to stay outside the town and we were lucky in finding the right place. Located 5 km outside the town on the Lakhamandal road was the Himalayan Paradise hotel, a small homely place located at the edge of a forest and surrounded by open cultivated area and scrub. There was a deep valley below and a steep rocky hill, sparsely vegetated, rose from behind us. A stream flowed through the valley and at a point where it crossed the road was a tiny hamlet. Surprisingly the entire water supply to the town appeared to be coming from this stream and it was a little disturbing to find lorries and trucks laden with water passing by every few minutes all through the day.

The sighting of the Himalayan yellowthroated martens was the highlight of our stay at Chakrata. Larger than the mongoose and with a low slung body, this animal had a beautiful appearance with dark brown upper parts and yellowish white throat and belly and long tail. We first noticed three of these animals early morning, just a 100m from our hotel, crossing the road. Having ventured out of the wooded valley they bounded up the hillside along a rocky ledge, stopping to examine crevices and nooks for possible nests and other items of food. We followed their progress for a good 3-4 minutes before they disappeared in the rocks. On four other occasions we saw single animals more or less sticking to the same path and following the same behaviour pattern. We even noticed the marten climbing trees with great ease and agility.

Himalayan griffons were commonly seen in the area and we found quite a few birds nesting on the ledges of the cliff above us. We could see birds bringing in twigs to line their nest. A few juvenile birds were also noticed. On two occasions we saw a lammergeier in flight. Kestrel was another common bird of prey, regularly seen hovering in mid-air looking out for prey.

The patch of scrub and forest next to the hotel proved interesting for several birds. Every morning I would be up well before the

others to watch birds, as they appeared to be active even before the sun lit up the landscape unlike in the south where the activity would peak only after the sun comes up. The redbilled blue magpie was one of the regular visitors at the hotel each morning arriving between 5.30-6.00 at the verandah, where it foraged for scraps. It was a handsome bird with its strikingly long tail. Himalayan treepies were also regularly seen in small flocks or in pairs. The Himalayan whistling thrush was another common inhabitant, seen even out in the open. Though it was heard in song, I found theirs was inferior in quality compared with their counterpart - the Malabar whistling thrush of the Western Ghats. Often we noticed territorial disputes and birds chasing each other. Dark grey bushchats, whitecheeked bulbuls (nesting), brown hill warbler, streaked laughing thrushes (nesting), jungle mynas, redumped swallows, house swift and great Himalayan barbet were among other commonly encountered species in the vicinity of the hotel. One morning I noticed a single speckled piculet in the company of other small birds on a shrub.

On our walks around we noticed the blackchinned or redbilled babbler, a tiny bird usually in pairs in the scrub. It was one of those restless and active birds, constantly on the move and usually calling a single noted '*chirr*'. Slatyheaded parakeets were commonly seen in flight in flocks. Their call-note '*treep*' was quite distinctive as well as their yellow tipped tail and darker head. Rustycheeked scimitar babblers were also commonly seen and heard. I noticed small flocks of variegated laughing thrushes on 3-4 occasions. Closer to the stream, we noticed a pair of spotted forktails foraging in the water. A whitecapped redstart was also seen there. Black partridges were occasionally seen or heard in the open areas and in the fields, now barren. Closer to the habitation, we saw spotted doves, blue rock pigeon, common and bank mynas. An interesting bird that we saw near the hamlet was the cinnamon tree sparrow, with a call like our house sparrow's but sweeter. The male bird had superficial resemblance to the latter bird but had a delicate wash of pale yellow and russet coloured head. Again this appeared to be the nesting season and a bird was seen collecting nest material in a bush.

The wooded area in the vicinity of the hotel extended to the Chakrata town and beyond. Walking on the roads conferred on us the advantage of good views, often at the level of the canopy. The wedgetailed green pigeon was seen in small numbers on fruiting trees. The orange colouration of their crown was clearly noticeable. Longtailed minivets, firebreasted flowerpeckers, greyheaded green woodpeckers, greyheaded flycatcher-warbler, blackthroated jay, rufous turtle dove and large crowned leaf warbler were among the birds seen here. Once we came across a large flock of redheaded tit numbering over 15 birds foraging in the open areas next to the road. The bird appeared fearless and came as close as a metre from me! There were some birds that lacked the black throat patch, suggesting these were juveniles.

We also ventured to nearby places using our minibus. We found Kanasar, 26 km away an interesting place for a picnic. Enroute we passed through a village of the Jaunsari tribe with their colourfully painted houses. Kanasar is preserved as a study plot by the forest department and has huge coniferous trees. One of the larger trees measured 6.5 m in circumference and was over 45 m in height. An interesting bird seen here was the Himalayan tree creeper. There were 4-5 of them busily moving about along the bark of a conifer. Greywinged blackbird, crested serpent eagle and a black eagle were among the other birds seen here.

Another site visited was Deoban, 16 km from Chakrata on the same route as Kanasar but at an elevation of 2300 m. This was also a well-wooded site. We saw several Gujjar families setting up camps or moving up with their cattle. A small forest rest house is located here and it would certainly be interesting to stay here and explore the surroundings. Several birds seen here were absent at Chakrata. We were welcomed by the sight of a plainbacked mountain thrush hopping out on the grassy meadow opposite the rest house. Nearby, there were several crested black tits, a pair of whitebrowed blue flycatchers, a scalybellied woodpecker, a blackbrowed flycatcher-warbler with its double black brows and a golden ring round its eyes, and a large hawk-cuckoo (identified by calls). We walked up to a point known as Vyas Shikar from where we had a good view of the snow-clad peaks.

The third excursion we had was to Tiger falls, also 16 km from Chakrata but in the opposite direction. We descended down the Lakhamandal road and branched out to a smaller road. We had to trek the last kilometre to reach the falls through cultivation and settlement. There was not much water at the falls but just enough for a shower and the shallow pool at the base added to the fun. Bird-wise, we did not see much except a pair of plumbeous redstart that was seen at close range. We also spent some time around the forest rest house at Chakrata which had a good forest patch. Here again we saw good forest birds including the Himalayan barred owlet, Himalayan pied woodpecker, blackcapped sibia and other common birds such as whitethroated laughing thrush and greenbacked tit (nesting).

All along we had been hearing a call near our hotel which had intrigued me. It was impossible to locate the bird and enquiries with the local people failed to elicit any useful information. The call was loud and far carrying, heard all through the day. It sounded very much like the calls of the hoopoe, but had four notes and was uttered in succession of 6-7 calls at a stretch. It could be written down as 'Uk-ku-ku-ku'. On return, I looked up the Handbook by Ali and Ripley and was surprised to be able to identify the call within minutes as that of the Himalayan cuckoo.

We were reluctant to leave on the last day and return to the plains. It was with sad feelings that we said goodbye to the owner of the

hotel, who became a close friend, on the morning of 4th May. We descended the hills rapidly and reached Kalsi at the foothills where we saw old friends like the golden oriole, black drongo, coppersmith etc. Since we still had some time at our disposal, we decided to have our lunch at the Asan Barrage. A large water-body, converted into a tourist spot, Asan Barrage still has something to offer to the birdwatchers. Apart from the dabchicks, little and median egrets, purple heron, a painted stork and over 20 openbill storks, there were 60-odd ducks of four species - spotbill, wigeon, garganey and the ruddy shelduck. All these birds rose simultaneously in the air with the arrival of a fine, majestic-looking Pallas' fishing eagle that landed on an islet. I also got the first glimpse of the Himalayan pied kingfisher, fishing in the lake along their smaller relative, the lesser pied kingfisher. The former was silent and had bars on its back.

Thus came the end of our sojourn in the Himalayas. It was a particularly thrilling experience for me because of the several new birds I was able to see out of the total of nearly 195 species recorded by us. This was my second visit to the Himalayan region. I could put to use and try out the two new 'Field Guides' - the shorter version of 'Grimskipp' and Kazmierczak's book. I found the latter more useful to a great extent - it had been well designed for field use with easily locatable plates thanks to the pictorial key in the beginning of the book and the more familiar sequence of Ali and Ripley. Clever designing has made the book useful in the field as it has all related species in the same plate, a feature invaluable for quick comparison especially in unfamiliar terrains. It also contains a lot more information about altitudinal distribution (an important feature in the Himalayas), description of calls and other such details. I feel several reviewers of this book have been unfair to it in their criticism while the book by the 'Grimskipp' has grabbed all their praises. I found their shorter version, a difficult book to use in the field as it had an unfamiliar sequence, very limited information, insufficient to identify birds with certainty in the absence of details about calls, altitudinal distribution etc. Comparing these new books with our own 'Pictorial Guide', I truly feel sorry that we had lost a golden opportunity to make the best out of the lead we had enjoyed for over 15 years in making it a true 'Field Guide'.



List of Birds Observed during the period from 11.4.2001 to 15.4.2001 at Murud (Karde), Maharashtra

KIRAN VASANT PURANDARE, 62 / A, "Prashant" bungalow, Erandawane Gaonthan, Next to Mhatre Bridge, Pune 411 004, Email - pakshiveda@hotmail.com

Common flameback: *Dinopium javanense* (2 & 3). Quite common around the human habitations and in the dry deciduous forests. Mostly heard. The loud piping call confirms its presence.

Brownheaded barbet: *Megalaima zeylanica* (2 & 3). Only heard. The bird could not be spotted. Call louder than that of the whitecheeked barbet.

Coppersmith barbet: *Megalaima haemacephala* (2 & 3). Commonly seen on the trees near houses. Two nests were located. One of the nests was found in a *Drumstick* tree, close to an occupied bungalow. Another nest was excavated in a Coral tree.

Indian grey hornbill: *Ocyrceros birostris* (2 & 3). A pair was seen on a fruiting *Banyan* tree close to human habitations.

According to the local sources the grey hornbill regularly breeds in the Murud area. They make use of old, huge trees as their nesting sites.

Common kingfisher: *Alcedo atthis* (4). Observed on the banks of a stream flowing through an open area. The feeding perch was marked with "white wash", faeces of the bird.

Pied kingfisher: *Ceryle rudis* (4). This black and white bird was observed in the vicinity of a river performing its hovering flight .

Indian roller : *Coracias benghalensis* (3). Perched on the electricity wire running through cultivated fields. The bird perched motionless for about half an hour or so.

Common hoopoe: *Upupa epops* (2 & 3). Observed flying across the off shore zone and entering into a mango grove.

White-throated kingfisher: *Halcyon smyrnensis* (2, 3 & 4). Courtship display observed near Karde village. A pair perched atop *Thespesia* tree participated in the display. Sitting closely, each bird displayed its brightly coloured wings with an erect body stance. Wings were opened and closed in sudden jerks as if operated by mechanical device. One of the birds left its perch and landed in the harvested paddy field to pick up an insect. No calls were heard during the display. The courtship ritual continued for about 10 to 15 minutes.

Black-capped kingfisher: *Halcyon pileata* (4). This brilliantly coloured Kingfisher was located on a roadside tree, on various occasions. Habitat preferred by the bird was open wooded country dotted with sparse habitation and a river flowing nearby.

Green bee-eater: *Merops orientalis* (3). Actively feeding on flying insects, the Bee-eater was seen on the sea coast. Also seen in open, cultivated country, on the slope of a hill, next to Murud village.

Asian koel: *Eudynamis scolopacea* (2 & 3). Commonly seen and heard around houses and groves. Scattered pairs were also seen on fruiting *Ficus* trees actively feeding on the red figs. Interactions between the koel and the crow were quite common.

Greater coucal: *Centropus sinensis* (2 & 3). Heard several times more often than seen. Its favourite haunts were groves and dry deciduous forest.

Vernal hanging parrot: *Loriculus vernalis* (2 & 3). Seen flying, dashing from tree to tree accompanied by a trisyllabic note. Also known as Lorikeet this parakeet hangs upside down like a bat while roosting.

Rose-ringed parakeet: *Psittacula krameri* (2 & 3). Loose flocks of 5 to 6 birds observed mostly in overhead flight.

Asian palm swift: *Cypsiurus balasiensis* (2). A flock of about 15 + swifts was always seen around the *tad* palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) which is used for roosting and nesting activities. The *tad* palm was standing on the banks of a seasonal stream, about 100 to 150 meters from the seashore.

Grey nightjar: *Caprimulgus indicus* (3). Heard at about 11.30 p.m. during the moonlight night. Habitat was the lateritic plateau with rocky outcrops and open woodland.

Large-tailed nightjar: *Caprimulgus macrurus* (3). Calls heard in the same habitat as of the grey nightjar. An individual bird was located on a rocky exposure in the torch light.

Laughing dove: *Streptopelia senegalensis* (2 & 3). Scattered pairs in open forest and cultivated fields. Observed perched on electricity wires and also on the bullock-cart tracks gleaning grains and grit.

Spotted dove: *Streptopelia chinensis* (3). Habitat preference not significantly different from the laughing dove. The call kroo-kruk-krukkroo! heard frequently especially in the morning hours.

Yellow-footed Green pigeon: *Treron phoenicoptera* (2 & 3). A flock of about 20 birds observed on fruit laden Banyan tree standing at the edge of the road to Harne.

Whitebreasted waterhen: *Amaurornis phoenicurus* (4). This rather shy bird was found on the banks of a stream near village Karde. Whenever disturbed due to birdwatchers it used to rush into the thickets bordering the streams. Along with many other birds, the whitebreasted waterhen is also hunted by the local people for its meat.

Common sandpiper : *Actitis hypoleucos* (1 & 4). Recorded on the sea coast, especially near the rocky shore as well as along the inland waters. At Karde while observing the bird closely, we found that it fed on the *Fiddler Crab* (*Uca vocans*). The bird would run on the mudflat bordering the river and try to snap a crab or two. (A colony consisting of hundreds of crabs were living on the banks of a river.) After having caught the crab, the bird would break the enlarged cheliped or pincer and eat the animal. Most of the times it succeeded in catching the male crabs. I am still surprised to have seen those funny orange feathers near the shoulders of a particular common sandpiper.

Ruddy turnstone: *Arenaria interpres* (1). There is a small patch of a rocky seashore when you travel from Murud towards Harne. The turnstones were first noticed here. It was a flock of about 6 birds, mostly adults in non-breeding plumage, with orangish-yellow legs, black breast and white shoulders.

Kentish plover: *Charadrius alexandrinus* (1). Sighted on the seashore. A pair was seen feeding on crustaceans in the typical plover manner.

Lesser sand plover: *Charadrius mongolus* (1). Recorded on the coastal zone, actively feeding during the low tide in small groups of 5 to 6 birds. White wing bar conspicuous in adult non-breeding birds. The lesser sand plover breeds in north Himalayas and winters on coasts of the subcontinent.

Yellow-wattled lapwing: *Vanellus malabaricus* (3). The YWL was heard at 11.00 p.m. during the night trail. Its bisyllabic tee-ee! note confirmed its presence even during the night. Is the YWL a semi-nocturnal bird?

Brown-headed gull: *Larus brunnicephalus* (1). Probably the most commonly and abundantly seen coastal bird, the brown-headed gull is a winter visitor. We observed this bird actively feeding on fish and other sea animals at the Harne fishing village in association with the pariah kites.

Common tern: *Sterna hirundo* (1). A huge flock of terns and gulls had settled on the Murud seashore, adorning the yellowish sandy beach. Through my binoculars (BERKUT 8 x 40, made in Russia) I could pick up the common terns with prominently black "capped" head and grey mantle. A few birds were found to be in the breeding plumage with red beak and leg.

Black kite: *Milvus migrans* (1, 2, 3 & 4). Earlier known as the pariah kite, the black kite is a useful scavenger. At Murud this bird of prey was seen in almost all habitats ranging from sea coast to human settlements and hilly region.

Brahminy kite: *Haliastur indus* (1, 2 & 3). A beautiful looking chestnut-red and white bird with rounded tail. Mainly observed on the seashores and the over-crowded fishing villages. Any person with love for birds would enjoy the sight of a Brahminy Kite soaring in the azure blue sky. Sometimes the Brahminy Kite migrates locally and stays near inland rivers and streams.

White-bellied sea eagle: *Haliaeetus leucogaster* (1, 2 & 3). I used to get up with the cackling duet of the WBSE at Murud. A pair of this magnificent eagle had selected a *Casuarina* tree for its nesting and roosting activities. A massive nest made up of small twigs and branches could be easily seen from almost anywhere. The height of the nest from the ground was about 30 meters. The WBSE is an accomplished fish hunter and mainly lives on coasts and offshore islands. The bird also feeds on poisonous sea snakes.

White-rumped vulture: *Gyps bengalensis* (2 & 3) Earlier known as the whitebacked or bengal vulture the white - rumped vulture could be located with the help of Mr. Vishwas Bhawe, the owner of the Surabhi Sea Resort. At Murud and its surrounding areas, these vultures use the coconut trees for their diurnal resting and preening activities. A lot of feathers of different types could be seen lying on the floor under the trees occupied by the vultures. Normally only one or two birds were seen on a single coconut tree.

Short-toed snake eagle: *Circaetus gallicus* (3). The short toed eagle was seen flying over the hilly region. Its dark throat contrasting with silvery grey underparts provide clues for field identification.

Oriental honey buzzard: *Pernis ptilorhynchus* (3). The honey buzzard is a raptor with narrow neck and small head. A large - billed crow was seen chasing it off. Two active nests of the crows were found at Murud.

Little cormorant: *Phalacrocorax niger* (4). This water bird was sighted on a tree bordering a river. An expert fish eater, the cormorant lacks oil glands. Therefore, it is seen perched on an outstretched branch of a tree and drying up its wings after the fishing is over.

Little egret: *Egretta garzetta* (4). Always solitary, the little egret was recorded around inland waters.

Cattle egret: *Bubulcus ibis* (3 & 4). A loose flock of about 10 birds was observed near Harne fishing village in company with house crows. The egrets were picking up fish, prawns and crabs that had fallen on the ground in the process of transportation. The cattle egrets were also recorded in the harvested paddy fields following the grazing cattle, feeding on insects and flies. A few egrets were seen in partial breeding plumage.

Indian pond heron: *Ardeola grayii* (1 & 4). Also known as the Paddy bird, this earthy brown water bird is an opportunistic feeder. It has an ability to exploit various microhabitats: seashore, rocky beach, roadside ditches, rivers, streams, flooded paddy fields, creeks and marshes. At Murud, the pond heron was seen on the rocky seashore, trying to feed in the areas also frequented by common sandpiper and ruddy turnstone.

Golden-fronted leafbird: *Chloropsis aurifrons* (2 & 3). Alternatively known as the green bulbul, the leafbird was recorded near Keshavraaj, a small temple, about 3 kms. from Murud. Perched on the *Kokam* (*Garcinia indica*) tree the leafbird was almost perfectly camouflaged.

Long-tailed shrike: *Lanius schach* (3). The Long-tailed shrike was seen in sparsely wooded country and cultivated fields. Perched on electricity wires, it would occasionally land on the ground to kill and pick up an insect. Also recorded in the *Casuarina* plantations bordering the seashore.

House crow: *Corvus splendens* (1 & 2) A very useful scavenger and active "reporter" of animal world. It shares different habitats with other birds. Seen in and around human habitations, extremely common in the fish markets and garbage dumps. Sometimes chases the Pariah and Brahminy Kites off and immediately returns to its domain.

Large-billed crow: *Corvus macrorhynchos* (1 & 2). Found in fairly large numbers, the jungle crow or the large-billed crow occupies similar niche as of the house crow. At Murud, the jungle crow was seen chasing off the common tern and Brahminy kite.

Eurasian golden oriole: *Oriolus oriolus* (2 & 3). Also known as the mango bird, the oriole prefers to live in mango groves, open woodland and trees near human habitations.

Black-headed cuckoo shrike: *Coracina melanoptera* (3). Recorded in the deciduous biotope. Male has a prominent black head and generally more greyish above than the female. Female has barred underparts and a white supercilium.

Small minivet: *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* (2 & 3). A family party consisting of males and females was observed on a mango tree near the campsite. Activities of minivets were restricted to the top branches of trees. Their flight was accompanied by feeble call notes.

Black-naped monarch: *Hypothymis azurea* (2 & 3). I was delighted to see this lovely bird, energetically feeding on insects and flies among the leaves of the mango tree. The mango tree was not very far from human settlement. I have never seen this bird so close to occupied houses.

Asian paradise flycatcher: *Terpsiphone paradisi* (2 & 3). Unfortunately, we could not see the male paradise flycatcher during the camp. However, a female was recorded on trees on the banks of a dry stream. The paradise flycatcher was also heard several times.

Common lora: *Aegithina tiphia* (2 & 3). Long - drawn whistles of lora were heard frequently as the breeding season was about to begin. Call notes of the Murud lora were found to be different from that of the loras elsewhere.

Orange-headed thrush: *Zoothera citrina* (3). This thrush was recorded on the last day of the camp near a dry stream.

Oriental magpie robin: *Copsychus saularis* (2 & 3). One of the most common garden birds at Murud, observed on almost all nature trails. A pair was seen building a nest in a hole of the *Prajakta* (*Nyctanthus arbor-tristis*) tree. Another pair found a hole in a coconut tree, a suitable place to nest. The male was heard singing enthusiastically in the early mornings and late evenings from the top of a *Cork* tree.

Indian robin: *Saxicoloides fulicata* (2 & 3). Common in open country with scattered trees, bushes and rock boulders. Always found in pairs, occasionally two males and a female seen together, while males involved in a sort of a tussle. One male was also found carrying insects in its beak to feed its young ones. Its nest was placed under the stone in an earth-cutting, besides the metal road.

Pied bushchat: *Saxicola caprata* (2 & 3). The pied bushchat was first sighted, perched on an electricity wire and the habitat was cultivated fields surrounded by thinly wooded country. Both male and female were seen together in two different localities.

Rosy starling: *Sturnus roseus* (3). A closely-knit flock of about one hundred rosy starlings was observed at 6:00 p.m. near Harne fishing village. rosy starlings (also known as the rosy pastors) breed in Eastern Europe, Western and Central Asia. This cousin of myna (family Sturnidae) is one of our earliest winter visitors. It normally starts arriving in July and departs by end April . The arrival and departure dates indicate that the rosy starlings spend more than 8 months every year in their wintering ground.

Common myna: *Acridotheres tristis* (2). As the name suggests the common myna is often met with bird in Murud and its vicinity. However, it prefers densely populated towns and suburbs.

Jungle myna: *Acridotheres fuscus* (2 & 3). More common than common myna. Loose flocks of 4 - 5 birds were recorded in open cultivated fields and deciduous forests.

Great tit: *Parus major* (2 & 3). Joyous, chirping call notes of the great tit were frequently heard from gardens and groves.

Wire-tailed swallow: *Hirundo smithii* (4). The tiny wire-tailed swallow was found in its typical habitat-a fresh water stream cascading its way through cultivated fields and sparsely wooded country. Perched on telegraph wires the wire-tailed swallows allowed close approach and clear view to the campers. A pair was seen. Activity reported was feeding, resting, preening and drinking water in the manner of the birds of this family (*Hirundinidae*).

Red-rumped swallow: *Hirundo daurica* (3 & 4). A pair of the red-rumped swallows had built its nest stuck under the roof of a motor house in the campus of a hotel at Murud. Also observed flying overhead in a typical swallow manner, turning and twisting effortlessly and hawking insects on wings.

Red-whiskered bulbul: *Pycnonotus jocosus* (2 & 3). Quip-querita! or chick-jack-trio! were the frequently heard cheerful notes of the bird which found itself a place in the gardens and vegetation around the fields . Old, deserted, cup-shaped nests of the bulbuls were also found.

Red-vented bulbul: *Pycnonotus cafer* (2 & 3). Not as common as the red-whiskered at Murud, prefers secondary growth and trees around human habitations. 'Jack potato!' was the often repeated call of the bulbul. Recorded on a *Coral* tree, feeding on the flower nectar sometimes along with the Red-whiskered bulbuls.

White-browed bulbul: *Pycnonotus luteolus* (3). The white-browed bulbul is found in peninsular India and Sri Lanka. Its favourite haunts are forest edges and scrub country. At Murud, a pair of this bulbul was seen building a nest in a bush, bordering the fence of a farm house.

Oriental white-eye: *Zosterops palpebrosa* (2 & 3). A loose party was seen on the trees, actively moving about and feeding on insects. This bird was seen in an open country with deciduous element.

Common tailorbird: *Orthotomus sutorius* (2). Commonly seen in gardens and coconut plantations feeding in small shrubs. Mostly seen in pairs.

Thick-billed flowerpecker: *Dicaeum agile* (2 & 3). Quite common in mango groves, almost inseparable from *Loranthus* laden mango and other trees. Occasionally seen in company with sunbirds and other flowerpeckers . Sometimes difficult to locate given its small size (10 cms) and arboreal habits.

Purplerumped sunbird: *Nectarinia zeylonica* (2 & 3). Common everywhere, occupying almost all possible habitats except actual seashore and fresh water courses. Partial to flowering trees such as *Coral* and *Silk Cotton*. Also freely enters gardens and vegetation around bungalows.

Purple sunbird: *Nectarinia asiatica* (2 & 3). A male purple sunbird was sighted on a *Gliricidia* tree. The Murud habitat is most perfectly suited for sunbirds of all species as they prefer secondary growth, deciduous forest, cultivation, groves and wooded country.

Crimson sunbird: *Aethopyga siparaja* (2 & 3). The alternative common name of the crimson sunbird is yellowbacked sunbird. At Murud, this bird was seen on the top of a mango tree calling zestfully.

House sparrow: *Passer domesticus* (2). Fairly common especially in and around human habitations. Readily nests in houses. Number of this bird in a particular locality becomes conspicuous at the time of retiring and rising activities.

Chestnut-shouldered petronia: *Petronia xanthocollis* (2 & 3). Spotted atop *Teak* tree calling quite loudly. This bird is known to nest in the abandoned nests of coppersmith barbet. Both the house sparrow and the petronia occupy same habitat at Murud, although petronia does not enter into inhabited houses.

White-rumped munia: *Lonchura striata* (2 & 4). Single record from Murud. This munia was seen on the banks of a seasonal stream.

Note : New common English names of the birds have been taken into consideration.

Habitat code: Numbers in bracket after the Latin name indicate habitat code. 1. Sea coast 2. Human habitations, gardens & groves. 3. Hills, hill slopes and deciduous forest. 4. Rivers, streams & ponds.

References

The Book of Indian Birds - Dr. Salim Ali (Twelfth Revised and Enlarged Centenary Edition)

Pocket Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent, Richard Grimmett, Carol Inskipp, Tim Inskipp



Terns Nesting on the Vengurla Rocks Archipelago

Dr. SATISH A. PANDAE, Ela Foundation, C-9, Bhosale Park, Sahakarnagar - 2, Pune 4110 099

We visited the Vengurla Rocks archipelago (N-16 35' 45' & W-73 27'-30') on Sep. 8 and 9, 2001. The archipelago is situated in the Arabian Sea and it can be approached from the nearest fishing hamlet of Niwati-Medha. We reached the Burnt Island where we had earlier observed the poaching of the nests of the Indian edible-nest swiftlets-*Collocalia unicolor*. (NLBW

Vol.41, No.3, May-June-2001) The sea was a bit rough due to a strong westerly wind and the high waves had soaked us to the skin almost immediately after we had started our marine cruise of 7.5 nautical miles from the coast in a motor driven fibre boat. Throughout the journey we could see terns moving towards the island with fish in their beak. They kept close to the sea surface

as they approached the island to avoid the head wind. The returning terns had a tail wind and they flew at a considerable height to take its full advantage. When we reached within 200 mts. of the Burnt island, more than a thousand terns took to their wings as one, and this was a sight that we shall forever cherish in the memory. The vertical sharp latterite rocks, laden with goose barnacles, prevented a closer approach of the fibre boat and I jumped in the sea and swam a few meters to reach the island and then gently pulled and pushed the heaving boat with a long bamboo pole to and from the rocks, in unison with Mr. Shridhar Metar, our boatman and friend, who runs a resort in the hamlet. Others quickly alighted on the island and the photographic equipment was also eventually transferred. This took quite some time, considering the strength of the waves and the unstable conditions. Together with the earlier filming and photo-recording done by Mr. Vishwas Katdare in June, the present photographic documentation can be said to be the first photo-documentation of the nesting activity of the terns on this archipelago.

The terns seen nesting or otherwise on the Burnt Island were-
Roseate tern (*Sterna dougallii*) 200 pairs.

Common tern (*S.hirundo*) 100 pairs.

Greater crested tern (*S.bergii*) 400 pairs.

Bridled tern (*S.anaethetus*) 30 pairs

Indian river tern (*S.aurantia*) 20 pairs.

White cheeked tern (*S.repressa*) 1 pair-no nest found.

Sooty tern (*S.fuscata*) 1 pair. – no nest found.



A distinct pattern of nesting territory was observed. The greater crested terns were seen on the outer rocks, cliffs and ledges. The lowest nest was about 30 feet above the surf line at high tide. Maximum nests were seen on the eastern and northern portion of the island. The same pattern was seen on the other islands also. This prevented the direct onslaught of the SW monsoon winds. The nests on the other sides of the island were mostly towards the centre. Mr. Vishwas Katdare, Mone and Sachin Palkar had found 300 nests of the greater crested terns, a few of lesser crested terns, 800 of bridled terns and 150 of roseate terns on 6-6-2001.(NLBW Vol.41, No..4 July Aug.2001) All the greater crested terns had chicks ranging from a few days old to those capable of flight. Incubation was not seen. The youngest were white, then buff and then with a yellow brown wing pattern, all crestless. Bridled terns were very few and they had almost finished their nesting. Indian river terns and common terns were new arrivals. Roseate terns were present, almost all feeding the chicks, none incubating. There was not a single lesser crested tern.

Only one pair of sooty terns was seen, which took to wings and could not be photographed, but was identified due to the darker colour, larger size than the bridled and the white forehead patch not going back over the eyes. More than a thousand chicks of various ages could be seen. Many dead chicks, atleast 50, mostly a few days old were noted along with unhatched eggs and broken eggshells. The colony was very noisy by day and night. The river terns were seen to bring fish from near the costal creeks. They probably did not mind the journey in exchange for the colonial safety. The other terns mostly procured their food from near the island though a few terns of all species were seen coming to the

coast for easy food where the fishermen pulled their nets full of fish towards the shore.

Other Fauna On and Near The island : 1) A pair of Ruddy turnstones 2) A Few common sandpipers-above two were probably non-breeding staybacks and were also seen on previous occasion in April. 3) Two pairs of whitebellied sea eagles. These were confirmed predators of tern chicks. They carried the chicks to the adjacent old lighthouse island. 4) A flock of 22 Pomarine jaegers-pale non-breeding adult morphs (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) came from the north, alighted on the sea for a minute or so and took to wings and disappeared in the southern sky. 5) Two common grass yellow and crimson rose butterflies were seen flying leisurely over the waves and towards the sea at about 4 nautical miles from the coast. 6) Several blue rock pigeons were seen on the island. These were definitely larger in size than their usual coastal counterparts. 7) Crabs,goose barnacles,seurchins. 8) Marine life in the form of squids was particularly plentiful in this season. We saw a catch of as big as 75 kgs. at one go lasting a few hours. Fishermen showed us how the ink is spewed by the squids by pressing the ink gland of a dead squid. These glands are removed before cooking and the fried squid indeed tastes marvellous, and I can vouch for that! The colour of the ink is not permanent and it washes off easily. 9) Short shrubs and grass were seen on the Burnt Island. The chicks were using it as a hideout along with ledges and crevices.

Important Observations & Events about the Conservation of the Swiftlets: 1) The Indian edible-nest swiftlets-*Collocalia unicolor* were absent. They had all left the island after breeding, probably to avoid the hostile weather. 2) Much of the bamboo framework erected by the poachers was removed from the entrance of the cave and destroyed, by the forest authorities. Mr. Vikas Gupta IFS,DCF Sawantwadi has issued orders to remove the remaining bamboo as soon as the sea calms down. Shri Shirodkar and Shri Gadale have been given this important work. This is a very encouraging conservation action and it is highly laudable. Mr. Vikas Gupta and the Forest Department deserve our gratitude and heartfelt thanks.

The Vengurla Rocks Archipelago: On Sept. 9, 2001,we, along with foresters Mr. Gadale and Mr. Sawant surveyed the entire marine archipelago spread over a considerable area, to assess the nesting activity of the terns. Mr. Shridhar Metar fixed an extra Yamaha engine to the motorboat to reduce the travel time. I am mentioning the local vernacular popular names of the major islands in the archipelago for ready reference for anyone who wishes to study the area. The names in Koli dialect are – 1)Bandra (Burnt Island)- The most important island for the nesting of the swiftlets and the terns. 2) Deepagruha- Niwati lighthouse island has the new lighthouse.3) Mhasra 4) Maad. The last two have some tern-nesting activity. Bridled, greater crested roseate and common terns, total-50 pairs on both. 5) Kambra (Old lighthouse island). We searched this rather larger island. The previously mentioned new colony of the edible-nest swiftlets was intact-30 nests. No nesting terns were seen. Nest remnants from the previous year were faintly visible. The favourite roost of the whitebellied sea eagles, where they brought and devoured tern chicks was examined. Remains of the wings of chicks of greater crested terns were seen. Skeletons of sea-snakes and larger sized fish were noted. 6) Ovala-The marine currents here are

strong and eddies can be seen on the surface. Fishermen avoid this area. 7) Mharkasa 8) Mhalkumi 9) Devla-This conical rock resembles a temple. 10) Gobra 11) Karla 12) Dala. The following rocks submerge at high tide – 13) Vagli 14) Dhorga 15) Dhorgyachi Chaal-the last is a group of several small rocks. There are a few more smaller un-named rocks. None other than Bandra, Mhasm and Maad offered nesting opportunities to the terns this year. There is however evidence of nesting on Kambra from the

previous year and the new nesting colony of the swiftlets is seen on this island.

Team Members:

Dr. Satish Pande, Saleel Tambe, Chandrahas Kolhatkar-ELA Foundation, Mr.D.R.Gadale, Mr. Sawant-Forest Department, Sawantwadi, Mr. Shridhar Metar, Dr. Ganesh Metar and Mr. Nana- from the fishing hamlet of Niwati-Medha.



Painted Storks abandon nesting colony at Bhavnagar, Gujarat

I.R. GANDHVI, Hon. Wildlife Warden, Bhavnagar, Dist., and Lecturer, Zoology Dept, Sir. P.P. Institute of Science, Bhavnagar University, Bhavnagar 346 4002, Gujarat

In addition to the note given by Dr. Vashishtha in NLBW Vol.41 (1) Jan.-Feb. 2001 pp13, the phenomenon of abandoning the colony by the painted storks (*Mycteria lucocephala*) was also recorded in Bhavnagar, Gujarat.

Bhavnagar city (21°45' N 72° 08'E) is located on the eastern fringe of Saurashtra peninsula on the coast of the Gulf of Khambhat. The colony takes place in and around the Pill Garden (now, renamed as Sardar Baug) in the heart of the city. The colony is spread over an area of around 1000 m². The nesting activities usually commence from the first week of September and end in the first week of February (Ali, 1996, Dharmakumarsinhji, 1955). Average 100 pairs nest every year on the large trees like Neem (*Azadirachta indica*), Khijado (*Prosopis spicigera*), Ambli (*Tamarindus indica*) and Peltophorum (*Peltophorum ferrugineum*). Three water bodies viz. Kumbharwada, Old-Port, and Gaurishankar Lake provide food for the nesting storks. The water bodies near Kumbharwada and Old-Port receives sewage water from the surrounding urban area, which attract hundreds of wetland birds.

The phenomenon of abandoning the nesting colony was recorded three times in the last seven years. For the first time it was recorded in the third week of September 1994, approximately 80 pairs have abandoned the nesting colony due to heavy cyclone (exact date of the incident is missing).

In the second week of September 1999, 18 pairs have started nesting activities. In the first week of October, the owner of the Hotel Jubilee had placed a scarecrow atop the Neem tree on which five pairs had nested. The area under the canopy of that tree is being utilized as the parking place for vehicles of the customers of the hotel. On the basis of the complaints of the customers that their vehicles were getting dirty with the droppings of the storks, the hotel people committed this offence! On 18-10-99 one of my friends had drawn my attention towards the scarecrow. The scarecrow was placed in such a way that nobody could see it from the ground! But my friend (Shrenik Shah) had detected it while bird watching in Pill Garden. Being an Hon. Wildlife Warden, I photographed the scarecrow and rushed to the DFO Bhavnagar. With the help of the forest staff I got the scarecrow removed. But unfortunately the birds have already abandoned the colony with the placing of the scarecrow! Shockingly, the storks nested, 200 m away, from the scarecrow, had also abandoned the colony along with the directly affected birds!

Again in the year 2000, large number of storks appeared on the colony. On 8th September I have observed 91 pairs, busy in selecting their nesting sites, the number increased, when I visited the colony on 15th September, 153 pairs were recorded on their selected nesting sites. Of them 79 pairs had already started building their nests. I have taken photographs of the colony on 18th Sept. On 24th Sept., I observed a large flock of painted storks soaring over the city. I again visited the colony on 28th Sept. but I was shocked not to find a single stork on any of the trees! I had minutely observed the entire colony but there were no signs of disturbances recorded. All the storks have abandoned the colony due to reasons unknown! In fact due to the poor rainfall, all the three water-bodies near the colony were dry since June 1999. Hence the scarcity of food, found to be one of the important reasons for abandoning the colony.

For American White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*), Kushlan (1976) reports a similar response to rainfall for population in south Florida, where the number of breeding birds was 35 times greater in a wet year than it had been in a drought year.

Reference:

- Ali, S. (1996). The Book of Indian birds (Centenary edition). Bombay Natural History Society, Oxford University Press, Mumbai. pp 76-77.
- Dharmakumarsinhji, R. S. (1955). Birds of Saurashtra. Times of India Press, Bombay. pp 88-89.
- Kushlan, J. A. (1976). Site Selection for Nesting Colonies by the American White Ibis *Eudocimus albus* in Florida. *Ibis*, 118: 590-593.

CORRESPONDENCE

COMMENTS ON THE NEWSLETTER. Mr. Kumaran Sathasivam, 29, Jadamuni Koil street, Madurai 625 001

Web of Death (Sanjay B. Shegaonkar, Vol. 39, No. 1999, p.80): Regarding a Giant Wood Spider tackling a wren-warbler, the author writes that "The spider went ahead and pierced his jaws exactly behind the neck". The word 'her' should be substituted for 'his' because it is the female of this spider, I understand, that is as large as described, the male being much smaller.

Birds seen from the Bus between Kovilpatti and Tuticorin (H. Daniel Wesley, Vol. 37, No. 4, 1997 pp. 64-65 : I too have observed near Kovilpatti a grey-coloured bird that appeared to be a shrike. Is it possible that grey shrikes are found as far south as here? The Handbook says that the species is found south to Belgaum, and that there are two records from Cuddapah district. Have any Newsletter readers seen the species in the area?

A bird that is regularly seen when approaching Tuticorin from the north is the black ibis; I have seen only single specimens.

Webs, Vultures, Escapees and Birds of a Feather Flock together (Baljit Singh, Vol. 39, No. 3 1999 p. 48 : Further to General Singh's comments on the Lantana, one needs to remind oneself that a number of native birds are fond of this plant's berries. Thattakad, well known for its bird-richness, is said to be overrun, in places, by Lantana.

Anyway, in the long term, the present success of Lantana may prove to be unimportant. I suggest that if we leave this shrub alone, trees and other native vegetation will eventually re-establish themselves.

Bird Name Changes (Ranjit Manakadan, Vol. 38, No. 4, 1998 p. 68) : Considerable effort has gone into the creation of new names (common names) for our birds. Even as these names are being introduced, the scientific names change due to taxonomic revisions. Without expressing a preference for old or new common names, I would like to make the point that a reference that combines an updated synonymy with a catalogue of new and old common names would be useful in removing ambiguities.

Pied Crested Cuckoo 'Chatak' (Shivraj Kumar Khachar, Vol. 24 No. 7 & 8, 1984 pp. 13-14) : It was most interesting to chance upon the records of nocturnal pied crested cuckoo calls. I have heard them myself at Madurai. On three consecutive years, I have heard the pied crested cuckoo calling at midnight. My records are all from the middle of November – on practically the same date – as opposed to June in Gujarat; does this indicate any migratory movement of the Ceylon pied crested cuckoo?

UNUSUALLY LARGE CONGREGATION OF GLOSSY IBIS (*Plegadis falcinellus*) AT MADURAI. T. Badhri Narayanan and Kumaran Sathasivam, 262, II Main Road, Gomathipuram, Madurai 625020

On a birdwatching trip to Kunnathur tank (ten km east of Madurai) on 22.10.2000 an unusually large congregation of glossy ibises was seen. The ibises were in drab non-breeding plumage. There were approximately 875 birds (eight hundred and seventy five).

Glossy ibises are regularly seen in and around Madurai during the winter months but usually in small numbers. This particular tank has been censused regularly every year for the past few years during the midwinter waterfowl count. The number of glossy ibises seen over the past few years at Kunnathur tank are as follows: 1993(nil), 1994(nil), 1995(nil), 1996(113), 1997(no data), 1998 (27), 1999(nil), 2000(87).

The above data were collected during the midwinter waterfowl census in January. Looking at the Asian waterfowl census figures for the years 1992 to 1996, the maximum number of glossy ibises were sighted in Gujarat and Karnataka amounting to around 6000 birds in India. Hence this sighting of 875 glossy ibises is significant. This large congregation could be a pre dispersal gathering fresh from the breeding grounds.

The glossy ibis is partly resident, partly winter visitor in north, east and north east India, thence south to Kerala (Salim Ali).

Tamil Nadu is considered as the former distribution range of the glossy ibis (Grimmett). The glossy ibis was recorded in Madurai district by Edward G. Nichols. He mentions only two records of glossy ibises near Sholavandan (15 km northwest of Madurai).

Hence the above sighting of the glossy ibis and that too in such large numbers is significant and worth recording.

References:

- Ali, Salim (1996): The book of Indian birds. Bombay Natural History Society
- Grimmett, Richard and others (1999): Pocket Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent.
- Nichols, E.G (1945): Occurrence of birds in Madurai district. Part 3 J.B.N.H.S 45(2): 122-132

WOODPECKER PICKING UP INSECTS FROM AN ELECTRIC POST. K. Rantnam, 19-B, Trichy Road, Sulur, Coimbatore 641 402

Coimbatore neighbourhood received good showers on the night of 14.9.2001 after a long dry spell. Expecting good bird activity due to the overnight rain. I went out for a morning walk. Babblers and other small birds were active along the hedges bordering the country road. To my surprise, I noticed a golden-backed woodpecker (*Dinopium benghalense*) tapping a concrete electrical post. Three iron cross bars are fixed to the top of the electric post and the woodpecker tapped beneath the iron bars and picked up insects which came out from the gap between the bars and the post. It also circled the spot as it usually went round the tree trunks. When it noticed my watching with the binoculars it flew away. I think that this habit of searching for insects around man-made structures has not been recorded so far.

RE-OCCURRENCE OF DEMOISELLE CRANE (*GRUS VIGRO*) IN MYSORE DISTRICT. A. Shiva Prakash, S. Rames and M. Mohankumar, 227, 1st 'A' Block, 3rd Stage, 3rd Main road, Vijayanagar, Mysore 570 017

On January 28, 2001, waterfowl census was conducted in the backwaters of Krishnaraja Sagar dam (12°24' 20" N and 76° 26' 36" E) at different locations where rivers Cauveri, Hemavathi and Lakshmana thirtha join. Stretches near rivers along backwaters were monitored by three individual groups. The group at Lakshmana thirtha stretch found eight nos. of Demoiselle crane at *Boodi thundu* near Ayarahalli.

Major E.G. Phythian-Adams (Retd.) had reported several thousands of these birds wintering annually along Kabini River near Nanjanagudu in 1940's, and had also observed the presence at Yelandur and T. Narasipura (junction of River Cauveri and Kabini), Mysore district. Sri Salim Ali also quotes this record in his 'The Birds of Mysore' article in 1943.

Afterwards there was no record of these birds in Mysore District except on one occasion. Two birds were sighted at Maddur Lake (12°5' 0" N and 77° 2' 0" E), Yelandur Taluk on January 23, 1992 during waterfowl census, the place very near to the sightings of Major Phythian-Adams. Therefore, the recurrence of these birds in Mysore district but in very few numbers is worth noting.

Reference :

- Major E.G. Phythian-Adams, I.A. (Retd), F.Z.S. (1940) : Small game shooting in Mysore. J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc. 41(3) : 594-603.
- Salim Ali (1943) : The Birds of Mysore : J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc. 44(2) : 206-220.

PROVE ME WRONG! Lavkumar Khacher, 646, Vastunirman, Gandhinagar, Gujarat 382 002

Nirmala Chathoth and Karmavir Bhatt of the Surat Nature Club took me birdwatching along a trail by the river Purna in the Dang Forest (22.11.2001). Locating birds in the tall, sun and shade dappled canopies of trees was a veritable pain in the neck. Most of the birds were disembodied calls emanating from the foliage of lofty trees. Being familiar with bird calls was a tremendous advantage. It was therefore a relief to watch a off colour male yellowback sunbird (now renamed Crimson sunbird) and what Nirmala pointed out as a female redbreasted flycatcher at eye level. I was uncomfortable with the identity of the flycatcher however, because the clicking call was not what I was familiar with, nor did the colour quite resemble that of the one time very widespread redbreasted flycatcher. I suggested we were looking at a female whitebrowed blue flycatcher (now renamed ultramarine flycatcher)! Even as I said this, I had some doubts, because the bird we watched seemed larger than the "Blue" and the white at the base of the tail was far too conspicuous, nor was the call quite right. Nirmala also mentioned that the males she had seen had very conspicuous red on the breasts. We certainly had a problem here.

Next morning, while sitting reading outside my tent, the contentious flycatcher started calling from a dense clump of bamboo and I noted down the call. It sounded very distinct from the "trrrr..trrrr...trr" of the red breasted flycatcher's (now called redthroated flycatcher) and the near similar sound of the whitebrowed blue flycatcher. The call can be best rendered "purr..purr" followed by a "chip.. chip... chip". This is exactly as I later found described in the field guide by Krys Kazmierczak for the Kashmir flycatcher, a Red data species! A male has to be located and the distinct black border to the darker red throat and breast noted. If confirmed, we would have a wintering population in the Dangs of this rather little known flycatcher, which has been recorded along the Western ghats and noted as wintering in the highlands of Sri Lanka. So, young friends, prove me wrong, as indeed I have been questioning so many claims by several among you.

I have been rather puzzled as to how there have been claims of black and orange flycatcher sightings in the Dangs and the Rajpipla hill forest. Well, I think I have an explanation. I was stumped by seeing an orange tailed flycatcher flitting high up in a bare tree. I pointed it out to Karmavir. As I glassed it, I noted the familiar tail shiver of the black redstart! This normally eye and ground level operating bird seems to have taken to hunting up along boughs of tall trees confounding eager, budding ornithologists as it certainly did me. Had I not developed a habit of skepticism, I too would have added one more species to the Gujarat Bird list and incidentally my life. I have yet to see this very distinctive and highly endemic flycatcher which frequents "undergrowth of shoals, cardamom and coffee plantations; damp

overgrown ravines". During my transit of Munnar in Kerala it had been raining rather heavily and so I never got an opportunity to search for this attractive little bird, which Salim Ali informed me, was extremely parochial.

Incidentally, though I suspect that some of the redbreasted flycatchers here in the Dangs might well be Kashmir flycatchers, I will add the species to my life list and place it on the Gujarat List only after being categorically confirmed by myself or my friends on seeing the black border to the red throat and breast of the males. Till such time, the "?" will remain.

THE ANTICS OF A MONGOOSE by S.G. Neginhall, IFS (Retd.) # 643, 9th Main, 2nd Cross, III Stage, III Block, Basaveshwaranagar, Bangalore 560 079

This has reference to the query by Mr. Narayan Deb in his article "Encounter with whistling teals" (Issue 6. No. 41) about the tree climbing abilities of the mongoose.

During my visit to Bandipur National Park in July 2001, I came across the burrow of a mongoose, which was an abandoned termite mound just about ground level. The burrow had a pair of off springs and the mother was frequenting the burrow to tend them. On one instance the mongoose climbed a 20 feet tall tree with considerable ease and ran across horizontally spreading branches, as we stared with disbelief at the amazing arboreal predatory skills of the mongoose. No wonder the mongoose had climbed a tree and jumped inside the enclosure to make a quick meal of the ducklings in Mr. Narayan Deb's Abayapuri farm in Assam.

Announcement

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ABOUT BIRDS OF MYSORE REGION. Thejaswi S., Sibia House, 16th Cross, B Block, Vijaynagar 3rd Stage, Mysore 570 017

The Mysore Amateur Naturalists, Mysore is planning to bring out an annotated checklist of the birds of the Mysore region, the area considered for inclusion are the administrative districts of Mysore, Mandya and Chamrajnagar of southern Karnataka. Birdwatchers are kindly requested to send me published or unpublished information, on sighting of birds, numbers along with name of the place and any other details they think fit about the sightings for the geographical region mentioned above, details of sightings of rare and restricted range species, vagrants, may also be sent. Information is particularly required for the following areas: Biligiriangan Hills, Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary and Bandipur National park.

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Cover : **Spotted owlet** (*Athene brama*). A squat, white spotted owl with typically large round head and large staring yellow eyes. This owl is largely crepuscular and nocturnal, but not averse to hunting in broad daylight. When stared at, the spotted owlet holes up and stares back, often with its head skewed completely around, as if it were looking askance at the intruder. This owl was photographed during a visit to Rishi Valley in July 2001, to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Institute of Bird Studies and Natural History.

Photo : S. Shreyas

Newsletter for Birdwatchers

Vol. 42 No. 2 March-April 2002



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- ☐ An all-Black Crow Pheasant, by Dr. Arunachalam Kumar
- ☐ Nesting behaviour of Painted Storks, by Harish R. Bhat
- ☐ Enjoying birds, by Mrs. Pragati Nayak.
- ☐ Birds in Sariska, by Lt. Gen. Baljit Singh

Editorial

A "SWOT" for our Newsletter

'SWOT' (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) is a good technique for assessing and improving one's performance. I would welcome a few SWOT from our readers. You need have

no fear of offending me. I know my weaknesses more than any of you can possibly do. Perhaps I should set the ball rolling myself.

The objective of pleasant reading has been consistently maintained within the confines of the material received. This is our greatest strength though there is always room for improvement. There are no jealousies or resentments against other publications entering the field. In fact, it is a pleasure to see the general interest growing.

Several contributions need to be more severely edited and abstracts made of some of the larger articles. Some readers object to the shortening of their pieces but with the increasing material coming in, this will have to be done.

With a little effort the circulation could increase and the Newsletter needs to be more widely known.

None in evidence.

May/June 2002 Issue

The Guest Editor for the May/June number will be Aasheesh Pittie and I believe he intends to make the entire issue deal with changes in the nomenclature of birds. A standardised list of common and scientific names which all of us can rely on would be a great help.

Editor Away

I will be away in Kihim from early March till about the end of May. Kindly continue to send your letters, articles, to me and subscriptions to the Publisher as usual. I will attend to the correspondence after my return in early June. Till then "Stay with us" and "Take care" as is now the common greeting.

Visit to Mysore, Wyand and an Accident

On the 16th of January, Col. Thomas Chacko, well known for his sustained studies of the rare blacknecked crane in Ladakh and other areas, offered to take me and Shyamal K (entomologist, ornithologist, software engineer), to the Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary, Alattil P.O., North Wyand, Kerala 670 644.

We stopped the night of the 16th in Mysore and met the enthusiastic members of the Mysore Naturalists Society who have contributed many interesting articles to our Newsletter. They insisted that on the morning of the 17th we visit the Kukranhalli lake bordering one side of the Mysore University campus. What a delightful place it is! We reached there before the sun was up and though we could see nothing, the vigorous twittering and chattering of birds made us realise that soon there would be a treat for our eyes. And so it was. When the mist lifted, the first birds we saw there were hundreds of jungle mynas emerging from a clump of trees on an island in the middle of the water and then *en masse*, fly in a single direction all together, no stragglers deserting their ranks. Even more arresting was the enormous flock of white ibises (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*), which again flew *en masse* but in the opposite direction. Soon afterwards a large flock of little cormorants with their white cheeks, flew in a third direction. Presumably these different species were all

heading for their chosen favourite feeding areas.

High up on a ficus there were two spotbilled pelicans making a very impressive picture against the clear sky. There were darters, large cormorants, cattle egrets, grey herons walking with characteristic dignity in the water, large numbers of rosy pastors, purple moorhens, spotbilled ducks, a marsh harrier and a brahimny kite.

Apparently this impressive water body had its ups and downs, depending on the interest or otherwise of the Municipal Corporation. Some officials recognise its ecological worth; others regard it as a convenient basin for taking in the city's sewage. We understood from Professor Sadanand, a retired professor of Botany and Editor of a Kannada Encyclopedia, that recently sewage flowing into this lake had been diverted elsewhere and there is hope that things will improve.

On the banks of this lake there is lightly wooded scrub and grassland, a favourite nesting area of the stone curlew (*Burhinus oedipnemus*). Apparently a large number of these birds parcel out the territory among themselves during the breeding season.

After this pleasant morning outing, we drove up to Wyanad in Kerala (one stretch through the Nagarhole National Park), to spend a couple of nights at the Gurukula Botanical Sanctuary (Wolfgang Botanical Sanctuary). Thirty years ago Theuerkauf Wolfgang, then a boy of 19, came overland to India and fell in love with Kerala. Being a passionate botanist, Wolfgang decided that this was the right place for him and commenced establishing a Botanical Sanctuary near Manantvady. This has now become a well known Research Centre for specialist species of plants, ferns, orchids and others. The Ministry of Environment in Delhi wants to collaborate with this institution to preserve some of our rare plants in the Western Ghats. It has become widely known among botanists and ornithologists, and while we were there we had the privilege of birding with Alan Morley (about whom Bob Stewart wrote in the previous issue), a Consultant of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), no sound from an avian escapes him, and he intends to publish a book on bird calls, not by the normal attempted description by words (e.g. *crossword puzzle* for the cuckoo, and *did he do it* for the lapwing), but by a kind of Morse Code, of long and short, ascending and descending, and high and low pitched notes, which could become a definite dictionary for use by ornithologists. Groups of naturalists as well as generalists from abroad, congregate here from time to time (except in the four heavy monsoon months) to learn about the natural world. The stimulating atmosphere of the place can be conveyed by what Suprabha Seshan, the organizing ecologist of this unique effort wrote in 'News from the Sanctuary' of June 2001 :-

"Walking the forests is the private side of our work at the Sanctuary. The few remnants of tropical wilderness are our muse and inspiration. They discipline us. Guide us. Give rigour to the work. And perspective. We get to feel not only the creative force of life but also its mirror opposite – the distorted power of human nature. Juxtaposed with the wild are the ailing, diseased

landscapes that human beings have spawned, the ugly townships, the plantations, the rubbish dumps and slums, where our species' colossal greed and ruthlessness have spread wanton misery and desecration", and in the Jan 2002 issue, "The questions snowball year by year and the natural puzzle assumes staggering proportions. Why, for instance, did the *Impatiens* genus, radiate so explosively in these mountains? A single genus. *Impatiens*. Family *Balsaminaceae*. And this genus, which has a total of 800 species worldwide, has radiated into over a 100 species in this one mountain area alone. The rough equivalent of having a hundred different kinds of big cat, of the genus *Panthera* (which includes the lion, the tiger and the leopard), prowling around your neck of the woods. Not only is this impressive in itself, but it is the largest genus in India. None other has this many species. None of the genera within the orchids or legumes, or the grasses and asters – some of the other big plant groups – have quite so many. For a taxonomist, or a biogeographer, or even rainforest gardeners like us, this is a charming little detail."

This small mountain sanctuary, because of its location and well-preserved vegetation, has a wealth of birds, packed in a small space. Within a few minutes of arrival, we could see three species of sunbirds, a spider hunter, Malabar grey hornbills (those without a casque on their bills, unlike their cousins in the north with the queer protuberance, many emerald doves and racket-tailed drongos. And for me, a great thrill was to see the ruby throated bulbul (*Pycnonotus melanicterus*) for the first time, a bird that is worth going a long way to see, especially the sub species with its scarlet throat ! What interested me was that it behaved rather differently from its other cousins of the Pycnonotidae family. On a Calliandra tree bursting with white flowers it bent down and probed into the flowers for their nectar, just as sunbirds do, and a feeding habit rather different from the other bulbuls, bending over a flower to reach its nectar, unlike the other bulbuls.

And now, a brief reference to the accident. On the return journey on 19th January, with Col. Chacko at the wheel and Shyamal at his side, both securely seat belted, and I at the back seat without a belt, were suddenly confronted with the lorry charging at us. To avoid a head on crash and certain death, Col. Chacko at the wheel with his quick military response, swung sharply to the right, but could not avoid contact with lorry. Our car overturned. Kindly passersby, of whom there is no dearth in India, lifted up the car and put it back on its wheels. Chacko and Shyamal were able to unfasten themselves and walk out on to the bonnet through the opening provided by the missing windscreen. I woke up on the floor of the car, after a few minutes of unconsciousness, and was relieved to find that all three of us were unbroken. And while Chacko and Shyamal were involved with the inevitable police procedures, a generous gentleman (Mr. Suresh) on his way to Bangalore, offered to take me to a hospital and to look after me until help arrived in the form of Mrs. Chacko and my wife. The X - rays taken of my neck and back showed no damage had been done and I went home to lead a normal life except for a bad pain in the neck – the sort of pain to which Lavkumar refers when he has to identify warblers high up in the canopy of rain forests.



Introduction: Whenever we talk of wildlife protection, the normal tendency is to think of some forested area that needs protection from cutting or encroachment or other human use. Grasslands, wetlands, coasts, rivers, and rural landscapes rarely find a place in conservation priority, although some of the most endangered Indian species are found in such habitats.

Four members of the bustard family are found in Indian grasslands: The great Indian bustard *Ardeotis nigriceps* of the short grass plains and deserts; the Houbara bustard *Chlamydotis undulata* (winter migrant to the desert regions of Rajasthan and Gujarat); the lesser florican *Sypheotides indica*, found in the short grass plains in Western and Central India; and the Bengal florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis* of the tall, wet grasslands of the Terai and the Brahmaputra valley.

Just as the tiger is considered the "spirit of Indian forests", similarly the majestic great Indian bustard can be identified as an indicator of the health of grassland ecosystems of the Indian plains. The great Indian bustard forages, shelters, displays and breeds in grassland and its absence is the first warning signal that the grassland is deteriorating. The great Indian bustard is now on the brink of extinction. It is locally extinct from almost 90% of its former range and ironically it has disappeared from two sanctuaries made especially for its protection. In a few other sanctuaries it is declining rapidly. Earlier it was mainly poaching and habitat destruction that resulted in such a pitiable situation of this grand bird of the Indian grassy plains, but now mismanagement of the habitat, sentimental protection of certain problem animals, and apathy might exterminate this species.

In the early 1980s, the five states where the great Indian bustard is still found took some conservation measures and eight protected areas were declared. Despite all these conservation measures, the status of the great Indian bustard has sharply deteriorated during the last 10 years. This raises the question: Is the sanctuary approach appropriate for the protection of species that live in low density in scattered extant grasslands and marginal crop fields? The answer is yes and no. The sanctuary approach certainly helps in curtailing poaching but unless appropriate habitat protection measures are taken, declaring a sanctuary for bustard does not help in the long run. Now the question comes: how do you take 'appropriate habitat conservation measures' in someone's private land? Or, what do you do if the conservation measures result in increased crop damage by wild ungulates? Should we kill the problem ungulates to get the support of rural communities for the rare bustard, or should we allow the problem to fester and see the disappearance of highly endangered species? Unfortunately, due to lack of space, I would not be able to discuss all these issues here.

The following are the major problems:

1. Habitat destruction and habitat deterioration : Too many domestic animals. Disturbance during breeding. Conversion of grasslands and so-called wastelands into crop fields.
2. Poaching : Still widespread in parts of the Thar desert in Rajasthan.

Need for Project Bustard

ASAD R. RAHMANI, Chairman, IUCN Bustard Specialist Group and Director, Bombay Natural History Society

3. Increase in blackbuck and nilgai numbers resulting in crop damage and resentment by villagers against conservation movement in general, and bustard conservation in particular.
4. Corruption and total mismanagement of bustard sanctuaries.
5. No clear cut land-use policy and domestic animal grazing policy in India.

Presently, only between 400-500 bustards survive in India, making them one of the most endangered species of bustards in the whole world.

Need for Project Bustard

Project Tiger and Project Elephant have shown that by identifying an indicator species and focusing attention on it and its habitat, a substantial part of our natural ecosystem that benefits an array of threatened species can be protected. Bustards and floricans can be considered as indicators of the grassland ecosystems and by conserving them and their habitats, a very large number of species of Indian grasslands will also be protected. Protection and proper management of these grasslands would also benefit the local communities. The grasslands that are the preferred habitats of bustards/floricans are under-represented in the protected area network in India. Some of the bustard sanctuaries have been destroyed by misguided management practices. There is no coordination between states and among managers within states. We have nearly 20% of the world's livestock but no attention is given to protect grasslands on which this livestock feeds. There is no long-term research on bustards and at present we do not know even the basic biology of these highly endangered and declining species. Taking into consideration all these factors, the Government of India should start 'Project Bustard' on the lines of Project Tiger with the following objectives:

1. To conserve all the four species of bustards in India.
2. To conserve the habitat types of the Indian bustards and their associated species.
3. To establish with the cooperation of the State Government and local people more bustard conservation areas.
4. To supervise and coordinate management of bustard conservation areas.
5. To coordinate long-term studies on bustards and their habitats in different states.
6. To produce educational material for publicity for decision makers, stake holders, students etc.
7. To integrate bustard habitat conservation with National Grazing Policy and overall land use pattern.

During the last five years, the Bombay Natural History Society has been undertaking environmental education campaigns in the Thar desert where nearly 50% of the bustard population occurs. It is showing good results but this is not enough. The Government of India has not yet realized the deteriorating status of the bustard. Therefore, we have decided to start a one-year intensive media campaign by writing articles in different magazines, newsletters and journals. The Government of India will not do anything unless we bombard it with letters, requests and petitions. I therefore request the readers of our Newsletter to write polite letters to the following persons:

1. Hon'ble Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Prime Minister of India, South Block, New Delhi 110 011. Fax: 091-11-3016857/9817
2. Mr. T.R. Balu, Minister of Environment and Forests, Government of India, Paryavaran Bhawan, C.G.O. Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110 003

3. Mr. S.C. Sharma, Addl. Director (Wildlife), Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, Paryavaran Bhawan, C.G.O. Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110 003. Fax: 91-011-4363918



Heronries of the Raigad District, Maharashtra

SATHISH A. PANDE, PREMSAGAR G. MESTRI, ELA Foundation, C-9, Bhosale Park, Sahakarnagar-2, Pune 411009 and ANIL MAHABAL, Zoological Survey of India, WRS, Akurdi, Pune 411044

A preliminary survey of heronries of Raigad district of Maharashtra was undertaken in 1990 by Anil Mahabal. A survey of the avifauna in Raigad district of Maharashtra was again undertaken during the rainy season from June to September, 2000. We made a number of visits in the district including the coastal region, during which several heronries were recorded. Raigad district lies in the western part of Maharashtra, the Konkan, bearing 18 degrees, 19' N latitude and 73 degrees, 53' E longitude. The annual rainfall in the district is between 260 and 360 cm. The main agricultural crops are rice and ragi.

During the present avifaunal surveys a number of heronries and breeding populations of little cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger*, pond heron *Ardeola grayii*, median egret *Egretta intermedia*, (Wagler) cattle egret *Bubulcus ibis* (Linnaeus) and night heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* (Linnaeus) were noticed at different places in various talukas of the district (Table 1).

Table 1 also indicates that most of the heronries were observed on trees like Mango *Mangifera indica* (56 trees), followed by Tamarind *Tamarindus indica* (7 trees), Bamboo *Bambusa* spp. (5 trees); Shirish, *Albizia lebbek* (Benth.) (5 trees); Pipri *Ficus amplissima* (J.E. Sm) (2 trees), Neem *Azadirachta indica* (2 trees), Kate Sarvar *Bombax ceiba* (2 trees), Bahava *Cassia fistula* and Bottle Brush *Callistemon lanceolatus* (1 tree each). On an average the height of all the nests was 8 to 9 mt. above the ground level. Further, all the nesting sites of herons and egrets were close to waterbodies.

Types of heronries in the present survey:

Singh and Sodhi (1985) have described the system of classification of heronries in general. The heronries in Raigad district during this survey can be classified as follows:

1. All the heronries were very close to human settlement and hence they can be described as 'associated' type of heronries
2. The nesting and breeding of herons, egrets and cormorants was observed only on trees and hence they can be treated as 'tree' type of heronries.
3. All these heronries were of 'mixed' type as various species of herons and egrets were nesting together.
4. The heronries were either on a single tree or on scattered trees located in a small area, hence they can be considered as 'loose' type.
5. All these heronries seem to be small-sized.

Mahabal (1990) had recorded heronries at thirteen places in the Raigad district during his faunistic survey in July, 1987 (Fig. 1). During the present survey, besides the heronries at Pen, Panvel, Roha and Mangaon towns (as also recorded by Mahabal, 1990), an additional eleven heronries were observed in the district.

Table 1: Heronries of different places in Raigad district, Maharashtra.

S. No.	Place	Taluka	Dist.	Tree/No.	HT. (m)	LC	PH	MS	CE	NH	No. of Nests	Remarks
1	Panvel	Panvel	MD	Mango-5	9	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	12	B
2	Pen	Pen	MD	Mango-3	9	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	7	B
3	Pen	Pen	MD	Mango-7	11	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	214	B
4	Pen	Pen	MD	Mango-4	8	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	17	B
5	Pen	Pen	MD	Mango-1	8	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	15	B
6	Pen	Pen	MD	Mango-4	8	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	15	B
7	Pen	Pen	MD	Shirish-4	8	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	15	B
8	Pen	Pen	MD	Bottle-1	8	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	15	B
9	Pen	Pen	MD	Shirish-1	8	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	15	B
10	Pen	Pen	MD	Shirish-1	8	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	15	B
11	Pen	Pen	MD	Shirish-1	8	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	15	B
12	Pen	Pen	MD	Shirish-1	8	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	15	B
13	Pen	Pen	MD	Shirish-1	8	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	15	B
14	Pen	Pen	MD	Shirish-1	8	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	15	B
15	Pen	Pen	MD	Shirish-1	8	Y	Y	Y	-	Y	15	B

LC: Little Cormorant, PH: Pond Heron, MS: Median Egret, CE: Cattle Egret, NH: Night Heron, B: Breeding. The numbers in the parentheses represent the number of herons and egrets recorded. The numbers in the parentheses represent the number of herons and egrets recorded.



Hence, considering both the avifaunal surveys, altogether 24 nesting and breeding sites of herons and egrets have been sighted in this district. (Fig. 1). It can be inferred that in some cases even after 14 years, the herons and egrets were occupying the same nesting and breeding sites in the above mentioned towns. Hence, these heronries can be considered to be 'traditional'. Mahabal (1990) had earlier pointed out that hardly

any heronries were observed in the southern part of the district, but during the present survey a number of heronries were noticed in the southern part, particularly in Shrivardhan, Mhasala and Mahad talukas. It is also true that so far no heronry has been sighted in Poladpur taluka. Further, it can be said that little cormorants and night herons were not observed in heronries recorded by Mahabal (1990), whereas during this survey both these species were observed to be nesting for the first time, at many places in the district (Table 1).



Preliminary Report on the Indian Crested Peafowl in Channagiri Area, Karnataka

BASAVARAJAPPA S., Dept. of Applied Zoology, Kuvempu University, B.R. Project 577115, Karnataka

The landscape in the vicinity of my village is diversified with different types of vegetation, which naturally results in the presence of different species of birds. One of the birds I was particularly interested in was the large flocks peafowl in various areas, viz. horticultural plantations, paddy fields, scrub and dry deciduous vegetation in the Channagiri area. I decided to keep a careful record of these birds.

The peafowl, a large bodied gallinaceous bird (Order: Galliformes family phasianidae), a bird of brilliant plumage, has several species and subspecies in different parts of the world. The blue and crested peafowl *Pavo cristatus* is very common in the southern part of the Indian subcontinent. However, during recent years there has been an alarming decline. In many parts of India the killing and poaching of peafowl is taking place, and what is more distressing is that several birds died due to pesticide poisoning in Bihar, and also due to food poisoning in places like Polampur, Delhi. I am distressed to note that in many cities in Karnataka, peafowl feathers are made into fans and sold.

Study Area

Physiographically, Channagiri (a part of Davangere district) occupies a central position in the state of Karnataka and it constitutes the southern part of Deccan Peninsula. Further, it lies in between 13° 27' – 14° 39' north latitudes and 74° 38' – 76° 40' east longitudes with an altitude of 671 metres above msl. The landscape consists of vast stretches of plains with scattered small hillocks. The area receives 871.8 mm average annual rainfall. The climate is dry with 266.6 days sunshine. The mean temperature is 32.5°C, and the relative humidity is 70% (Basavarajappa and Hosetti, 2001a). The natural vegetation is confirmed to south west part of Channagiri taluka and which is diversified with deciduous tree species (Basavarajappa 2001a). The remaining area of land is scattered with horticultural gardens, paddy fields, rain fed crops and bushy vegetation particularly at the valley of small and uneven hillocks (Basavarajappa, 1998).

Materials and Methods

The study was carried out from 1998 to 2000 in different agro-ecosystems of Channagiri taluka of Davangere district. There were three different ecosystems identified at random viz., I. Plain area of 900 hectares (at Belalagere), II. Uneven land and small hills with sparse vegetation of 300 hectares (nearby Santhisagar – second biggest lake in South India) and III. Hillocks with dry deciduous vegetation of 600 hectares (at Joldhal). In each habitat, three permanent observation sites (1 sq. km. each) were selected

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and in each site regular observations were made every fifteen days to enumerate the group size of peafowls by following the method of Thirumurthi *et al.* (1993). The peafowls were age-classified as 'adults' and 'sub-adults' as per Cuvier (1993). Results were calculated and tabulated by following standard methods (Saha, 1992).

Results and discussion

The Indian crested peafowl *Pavo cristatus* in different habitat conditions of Channagiri area during the years 1998-2000 is shown in Table 1. The population consists of adult (viz., peacock and peahen) and subadult (juveniles) peafowl.

A. Adult population

Occurrence of cock and peahen in different habitats of Channagiri area is shown in Table 2. Among the adults, peahens were more, 38 to 45, 59 to 68 and 88 to 89 in habitats I, II and III during the year 1998, 1999 and 2000 respectively. Whereas, the peacock number was less and they were 8 to 12, 12 to 16 and 19 to 20 in habitats I, II and III during the year 1998, 1999 and 2000 respectively (Table 2). Further, the average number of male (cock) and female (peahen) peafowl occurrence during different years in different habitats of Channagiri area is also predicted in the Table 2. *Pavo cristatus* is a polygamous bird (Cuvier, 1993), the cock lives in the company of many peahens (Basavarajappa and Hosetti, 2001). Thus, the peahens were more compared to cocks and their population varied significantly ($F = 78.5$, $P > 0.05$) in different habitats of Channagiri area.

B. Sub-adult population

The sub-adult peafowl population consisted of the immature males and females with the age below 2 years. Until second year, the sub-adult male and female have the same plumage (Cuvier, 1993), and difficult to distinguish them as cock and peahen (Sharma, 1979). Thus, all the immature pea-chicks were together called 'juveniles' (Thirumurthi *et al.*, 1993). The juveniles were in the range of 19 to 39, 32 to 41 and 83 to 87 in habitats I, II and III during the year 1998, 1999 and 2000 respectively (Table-1). Hence, the total juvenile peafowl number varied significantly ($F = 65.27$, $P > 0.05$) among the habitats during the study period in Channagiri area.

Further, the habitat III (near Joldhal) had recorded highest (107 to 109 and 83 to 87) number of adults and sub-adult peafowls followed by the habitat II (at Santhisagar), where 71 to 84 adults and 32 to 41 sub-adults were recorded. The habitat I (located nearby Belalagere) has recorded the lowest number of adult (46

to 57) and sub-adult (19 to 39) peafowls. Thus, the peafowl population is high (195) in habitat III compared to habitat II and I (Fig-1). However, the major reason for the occurrence of more number of peafowls in habitat III compared to II and I, and the varied size group of peafowl in different habitats of this area has stimulated me to conduct further studies on habitat features, relative abundance and sex ratio of peafowl *P. cristatus* in Channagiri area. The results of those findings were published elsewhere.

Table 1. Adult and sub-adult peafowl number in Channagiri area.

Year	Peafowl	Habitat I	Habitat II	Habitat III
1998	Adults	57	84	108
	Sub-adults	39	41	87
1999	Adults	46	77	109
	Sub-adults	25	35	84
2000	Adults	46	71	107
	Sub-adults	19	32	83

Note: Each value is a mean of 24 observations.

Fig. - 1. Peafowl *Pavo Cristatus* population in Channagiri area

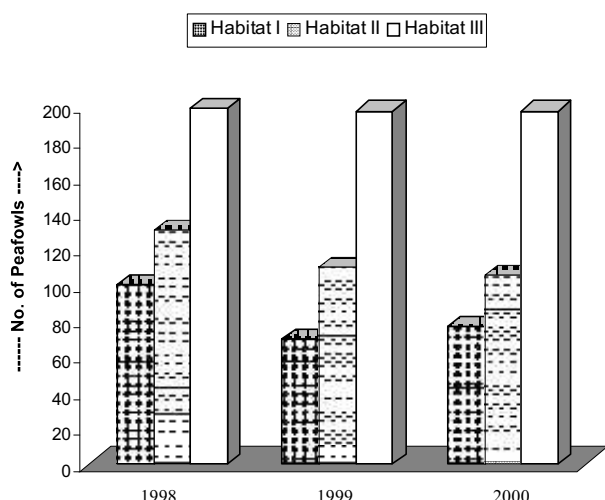


Table 2. Occurrence of peacock and peahen in Channagiri area

Sex	Year	Habitat I	Habitat II	Habitat III
Peacock	1998	12	16	20
	1999	08	12	20
	2000	08	12	19
	Average	9.3	13.3	19.6
Peahen	1998	45	68	88
	1999	38	65	89
	2000	38	59	88
	Average	40.3	64.0	88.3

Note: Each value is a mean of 24 observations.

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Acknowledgements

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ternate Nesting of Whitebellied Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucogaster*) in Konkan, Maharashtra

VISHWAS KATDARE and RAM MONE, Sahyadri Nisarga Mitra, Near Laxminarayana Temple, Chiplun, District Ratnagiri, Maharashtra

In Konkan the whitebellied sea eagle is fairly common throughout the coastline. Watching the soaring and gliding of this eagle is a beautiful experience. Since 1996 we have been studying this bird in the Districts of Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg (15° 35' to 18° 04' N and 73° 02' to 74° 13' E). We have located as many as 104 nests on the 285 km coastline of these two Districts.

As is well known, many large species of raptor have more than one nest, and they make use of them in alternate years. Sometimes, in spite of the other nests being present, they use the same one year after year (Brown 1997).

When we started this exercise on 12.2.1993, on a sandy beach at Guhagar (17° 30' N and 73° 11' E) 4 km in length and bordered by casuarina and coconut trees, we observed 3 nesting pairs with their active nests. One was at the south end of the beach on a horizontal branch of *Casuarina equisetifolia* at a height of about 30.5 m. The second was in a garden next to a house on a 440 m. long and 55 m. wide sandbar running between the sea and the mangroves. This plantation is more than 50 years old, having 97 small and big trees. The nest was again on a casuarina 30.5 m above ground. One adult bird was seen inside the nest and there was a considerable amount of droppings under the nest. 20 m

away from this nest there was an inactive nest at a height of 32 m. on a casuarina.

The position and sequence of nesting from 1992-93 and 1995-96 are indicated on the table given below.

List of Nests used in alternate years

Place	No. of Nests	Distance between 2 nests	Tree species
Murud MTDC	2	150	<i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i>
Anjarla	2	6	<i>Mangifera indica</i>
Harnai	2	80	<i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i>
Bag (Guhagar)	4	Given above	<i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i>
Guhagar	2	250	<i>Mangifera indica</i>
Palshet	2	30	<i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i>
Narvan	2	50	<i>Ficus bengalensis</i>
Rohile	2	1000	<i>Ficus bengalensis</i>
Rohile	-	-	<i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i>
Ambuvadi	2	Connected	<i>Ficus religiosa</i>
Varavade	2	22	<i>Mangifera indica</i>
Aare	2	14	<i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i>

Jaitapur	2	13	<i>Alstonia scholaris</i>
Kunkeshwar	2	2.5	<i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i>
Mithmumbri	2	300	<i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i>
Munge	2	30	<i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i>
Shiroda	2	100	<i>Casuarina equisetifolia</i>

All the nests had a diameter of 1 to 1.25 m and the distance between two nearest nests was 12 m and the longest distance between 2 nests was 318 m. Out of the 104 nests that we observed, 14 nesting pairs had more than one nest and used it in alternate years.

In our 5 years observations, we have never seen the sea eagle repairing either partly or fully any nest other than the occupied one in the same breeding season. Only in one place we had observed an eagle adding sticks to the old nest, but it suddenly abandoned it and built a new one. As far as we can judge, there is no definite sequence in using particular nests in any season.



Visit to Kanha National Park, Madhya Pradesh, India

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This checklist of birds is a welcome by-product of my visit to Kanha National Park (hereafter KNP) with M.Sc. final year students in January 2001. As part of the M. Sc. curriculum, students are taken on field trips to important national parks and sanctuaries to get an insight into the management of protected areas besides giving them an orientation in the field-based studies.

KNP is one of the foremost and famous national parks of the country. The name of the Park has been derived from the village Kanha, situated inside the National Park. The Park supports an admirable biodiversity. While the wildlife has its own charm the park's topography on its own has the potential for captivating you for life. It is regarded as a tiger land - home for more than 100 tigers, which is the flagship species of wildlife conservation projects of India. The park lies in the newly created state of Chhattisgarh, which was earlier in the state of Madhya Pradesh. Administratively, the park falls in Mandla and Balaghat districts and is situated about 1° south of tropic of cancer. It is a part of the central highlands in Maikal hills of Satpura, South of Narmada River. Kanha National Park is geographically situated between 22° 07' 22" 27' N latitudes and 80° 30' - 81° 03' E longitudes. The dumbbell shaped park consisting of two lobes, connected through comparatively narrow corridors, encompasses an area of 940 Sq. Km.

Kanha was established as Sanctuary in 1933 with an area of 232 Sq. Km, in 'Bangar' valley, similarly 'Supkhar' sanctuary was constituted in 1935 with an area of 300 Sq. Km, in Halon valley towards east of Kanha sanctuary. Later on Supkhar sanctuary was denotified in 1943 on account of alleged damage caused by wild animals to crops, domestic cattle and regeneration of forest species particularly Sal *Shorea robusta*. In 1955 the sanctuary was elevated to the status of National Park with an area of 446 Sq. Km. In 1973 the area of N P was further extended to 940 Sq. Km towards eastern side encompassing the area of erstwhile Supkhar sanctuary. Thus, the present day KNP encompasses a

compact and continuous area of 940 Sq. Km, including the area of both erstwhile, Supkhar and Banjar valley sanctuaries.

KNP was one among the first lot of nine tiger reserves selected in the country in 1973 with the launching of 'Project Tiger' to save the tiger in the wild. Under the directive policies of 'Project Tiger', each tiger reserve should have a core area in the centre surrounded by a buffer zone. Accordingly the entire area (940 Sq. Km.) was formed as the core area. Thus total area of Kanha Tiger Reserve is 1945 Sq. Km. (Core area = 940 Sq. Km. & Buffer zone = 1005 Sq. Km.) The core area is maintained as sanctum sanctorum. The buffer zone is a multiple land use area and comprises cultivated fields, villages, wastelands, roads and the forest. The forest area in the buffer zone is only 280 Sq. Km. The buffer zone is constituted as 'game reserve' under wildlife (P) Act 1972.

The park has rich flora of tropical moist deciduous forests categorized into sal forest, mixed forest, grasslands and wetlands. The distribution of sal and mixed forest is strongly correlated with topography. The valleys are dominated with pure chunks of sal. On slopes and plateaus, the proportion of sal reduces where it is replaced by mixed forest. Some of the mammalian species sighted were gaur *Bos gaurus*, wild dog *Cuon alpinus*, wild boar *Sus scrofa*, jungle cat *Felis chaus*, Rhesus macaque *Macaca mulatta*, langur *Presbytis entellus*, blackbuck *Antelope cervicapra*, sambhar *Cervus unicolor*, swamp deer *Cervus duvauceli*, cheetal *Axis axis* and barking deer *Muntiacus muntjak*.

A total number of 129 species of birds belonging to 46 families were sighted during the trip, among which some of the interesting species were common lora, gold fronted chloropsis, Tickell's flycatcher and Tickell's flowerpecker all of which I saw for the first time. While reports of the depleting vulture population are steadily increasing, we saw a nest of Indian whitebacked vulture with two chicks, which was an interesting sight as the parents

were busy feeding the chicks. On one occasion a flock of redvented bulbuls were seen feeding with house crows and white eyes. The feeding frenzy lasted for about an hour until the cacophonous flock of jungle babblers, which seemed to announce their presence also, disturbed them. The most common species were ashly drongo, house crow, redvented bulbul, grey hornbill, brown flycatcher and yellowcheeked tit to name a few. Among the uncommon species, some of them were emerald dove, gold fronted chloropsis, chestnutheaded bee-eater and wiretailed swallow. It can be concluded that the birdlife of KNP is quite rich and a total number of 260 species of birds are recorded from here till 1998 (Eric D'Cunha pers comm.). Though large numbers of tourists coming to KNP are keen birdwatchers, so far there has been no checklist published for ready reference.

Checklist of birds of Kanha National Park, Madhya Pradesh

Common Name	Scientific Name	Family			
Little grebe	<i>Podiceps ruficollis</i>	Podicipedidae	Common Sandpiper	<i>Tringa hypoleucos</i>	Charadriidae
Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Phalacrocoracidae	Indian River Tern	<i>Sterna aurantia</i>	Laridae
Indian Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>	Phalacrocoracidae	Yellowlegged Green pigeon	<i>Treron phoenicoptera</i>	Columbidae
Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>	Phalacrocoracidae	Blue Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	Columbidae
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Ardeidae	Ring Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Columbidae
Purple heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	Ardeidae	Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	Columbidae
Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	Ardeidae	Little Brown Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	Columbidae
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Ardeidae	Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	Columbidae
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Ardeidae	Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	Psittacidae
Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>	Ciconiidae	Roseringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	Psittacidae
Openbill Stork	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	Ciconiidae	Blossomheaded Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>	Psittacidae
Whitenecked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>	Ciconiidae	Pied Crested Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>	Cuculidae
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	Ciconiidae	Common Hawk-Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus varius</i>	Cuculidae
White Ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopia</i>	Threskiornithidae	Crow-Pheasant or Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	Cuculidae
Black Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>	Threskiornithidae	Scops Owl	<i>Otus scops</i>	Strigidae
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	Anatidae	Spotted Owlet	<i>Athene brama</i>	Strigidae
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	Anatidae	Indian Jungle Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus indicus</i>	Caprimulgidae
Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	Anatidae	House-Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	Apodidae
Common Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	Anatidae	Small Blue Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Alcedinidae
Spotbill Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>	Anatidae	Whitebreasted Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smymensis</i>	Alcedinidae
Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	Anatidae	Chestnutheaded Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>	Meropidae
Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>	Anatidae	Small Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>	Meropidae
Shoveller	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	Anatidae	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias bengalensis</i>	Coraciidae
Blackwinged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	Acciptridae	Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	Upupidae
Pariah Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Acciptridae	Grey Hornbill	<i>Tockus birostris</i>	Bucerotidae
Indian Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	Acciptridae	Large Green Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>	Capitonidae
Crested Hawk-eagle	<i>Spizaetus cirrhatous</i>	Acciptridae	Crimsonbreasted Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>	Capitonidae
Greyheaded Fishing Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>	Acciptridae	Lesser Goldenbacked Woodpecker	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>	Picidae
Indian Whitebacked Vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>	Acciptridae	Yellowfronted Pied Woodpecker	<i>Picoides mahrattensis</i>	Picidae
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	Acciptridae	Pigmy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides nanus</i>	Picidae
Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Acciptridae	Indian Pitta	<i>Pitta brachyura</i>	Pittidae
Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>	Acciptridae	Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Hirundinidae
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Falconidae	Wiretailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>	Hirundinidae
Red Jungle Fowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>	Phasianidae	Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	Lanidae
Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	Phasianidae	Rufousbacked shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>	Lanidae
Sarus Crane	<i>Grus antigone</i>	Gruidae	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>	Lanidae
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Rallidae	Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	Oriolidae
Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>	Jacanidae	Blackheaded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthomus</i>	Oriolidae
Bronzewinged Jacana	<i>Metopidius indicus</i>	Jacanidae	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	Dicruridae
Blackwinged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	Recurvirostridae	Grey or Ashy Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>	Dicruridae
Redwattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	Charadriidae	Whitebellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>	Dicruridae
Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>	Charadriidae	Greater Racket-tailed drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>	Dicruridae
Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Charadriidae	Brahminy Myna	<i>Sturnus pagodarum</i>	Sturnidae
			Pied Myna	<i>Sturnus contra</i>	Sturnidae
			Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	Sturnidae
			Bank Myna	<i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i>	Sturnidae
			Jungle Myna	<i>Acridotheres fuscus</i>	Sturnidae
			Indian Tree Pie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>	Corvidae
			House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	Corvidae
			Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>	Corvidae
			Pied Flycatcher-shrike	<i>Hemipus picatus</i>	Campephagidae
			Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	Campephagidae
			Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>	Irenidae
			Goldfronted Chloropsis	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>	Irenidae
			Redvented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	Pycnonotidae
			Jungle Babbler	<i>Turdoides striatus</i>	Muscicapidae
			Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa latirostris</i>	Muscicapidae
			Redbreasted Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa parva</i>	Muscicapidae
			Little Pied Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa westermanni</i>	Muscicapidae

Whitebrowed Blue Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa supercilialis</i>	Muscicapidae	Grey Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	Paridae
Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa tickelliae</i>	Muscicapidae	Yellowcheeked Tit	<i>Parus xanthogenys</i>	Paridae
Verditer Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa thalassina</i>	Muscicapidae	Chestnutbellied Nuthatch	<i>Sitta castanea</i>	Sittidae
Greyheaded Flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>	Muscicapidae	Velvetfronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>	Sittidae
Plain Wren-Warbler	<i>Prinia subflava</i>	Muscicapidae	Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	Motacillidae
Ashy Wren-Warbler	<i>Prinia socialis</i>	Muscicapidae	Yellowheaded Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>	Motacillidae
Tailor Bird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	Muscicapidae	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Motacillidae
Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	Muscicapidae	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Motacillidae
Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>	Muscicapidae	Large Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla maderaspatensis</i>	Motacillidae
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	Muscicapidae	Tickell's Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>	Dicaeidae
Dark-grey Bushchat	<i>Saxicola ferrea</i>	Muscicapidae	Purple Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>	Nectariniidae
Indian Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i>	Muscicapidae	White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosa</i>	Zosteropidae
Blue Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>	Muscicapidae	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Ploceidae
Orangeheaded Pied Ground Thrush	<i>Zoothera citrina</i>	Muscicapidae			



Avifauna in and around Jodhpur city, Rajasthan, India

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Introduction

The Indian region is incredibly rich in bird life, being a megadiversity country. Over 1200 species of the world's 9,600 species, are found in this region (Ali & Ripley, 1987). Birds have always fascinated man for their ability to fly, and their functional role in the ecosystem as pollinators and scavengers.

The city of Jodhpur (26° 19'N and 73° 8' E) is situated in the eastern fringes of the Great Indian Desert. About 158 species of birds belonging to 44 Families were recorded during the seven years long-term demographic and eco-behavioural comparative study on Hanuman langurs (*Semnopithecus entellus*) at Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary and Jodhpur. The habitat in and around Jodhpur city is mainly open scrub forest with patches of crop fields, farms, orchards and wetlands. The climate of this area is a typical hot desert type. During the summer the temperature is between 20°C to 45°C and may rise upto 49°C; the minimum temperature recorded during our study was 3°C. Humidity values vary between 27% and 66%. The annual average rainfall is 300 mm distributed over 20 rainy days. This wide range of climatical conditions have formed different types of microhabitats, which support a variety of aquatic and terrestrial birds. Vegetation of the area is typical of desertic scrub forest type represented by *Acacia senegal*, *Euphorbia caducifolia*, *Ziziphus nummularia*, *Grewia tenesc*, *Salvadora persica*, *Capparis sepearaia*, *Anogeissus pendula*, *Maytenus emarginatus* and *Commiphora wightii*. But, all these native flora are facing a threat from the spreading dense *Prosopis juliflora* on the banks of water reservoirs and the plains. Some good grassland and wetland patches were also present to support large numbers of migratory and aquatic avifauna. The main fauna of the area includes, hyaena (*Hyaena hyaena*), Indian wolf (*Canis lupus*), jackal (*Canis aureus*), Hanuman langurs (*Semnopithecus entellus*), Porcupine (*Hystrix indica indica*), Blue bull (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*) Jungle cat (*Felis chaus*) etc.

Methodology

I have been monitoring bird diversity in and around Jodhpur since 1994. Most of the birds were observed during biannual census and intensive survey of Hanuman langur population at Jodhpur. Besides this, birds were recorded by point count methods in the major vegetation types as well as at water bodies (lakes, ponds

and dams) and in agro-ecosystems for the over six years. Apart from this, chance encounters were also recorded. All identifications were based on field guides by Woodcock (1980), Ali and Ripley (1983) and Grewal (1995) and only those species with confirmed identification are given in this paper. Birds were sighted and identified with the help of a pair of binoculars (20 X 50 and 7 X 35).

Result and Discussion

Out of 79 families of avifauna present in the Indian sub-continent, 44 families were observed in the present study. A total 158 species of birds were observed belonging to 44 families as given in Table 1.

Muscicapidae (19 species), Anatidae (15 species) and Accipitridae (12 species) were the top-raking families representing 29% of the total number of species available in this area. 17 families (listed in Table 1) were represented by single species only. Six species of vultures were observed during the period of study, of which 4 are resident and two migratory. The most common and abundant of these seemed to be the Indian longbilled vulture (*Gyps indicus*) with fairly good breeding population in and around the city in the rock cliffs, followed closely by the whitebacked vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*) and Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*). The king vulture (*Sarcogyps calvus*) appeared to be present in low numbers. Griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) and cinereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) are winter visitors, and arrived every year in the month of November and left in March.

Table 1 : Checklist of Birds Found in and around Jodhpur with status

Family	Name	Scientific Name	Status
Podicipedidae	Little grebe	<i>Podiceps ruficollis</i>	C
Phalacrocoracidae	Large cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	R
Phalacrocoracidae	Indian shag	<i>P. fuscicollis</i>	C
Phalacrocoracidae	Little cormorant	<i>P. niger</i>	C
Phalacrocoracidae	Darter	<i>Anhinga rufa</i>	UC
Ardeidae	Gray heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	UC
Ardeidae	Pond heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	C
Ardeidae	Cattle egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	C

Ardeidae	Large egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	C	Charadriidae	Wood sandpiper	<i>T. glareola</i>	C
Ardeidae	Medium egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	R	Charadriidae	Common sandpiper	<i>T. hypoleucos</i>	C
Ardeidae	Little egret	<i>E. garzetta</i>	C	Charadriidae	Common snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	C
Ardeidae	Night heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	R	Laridae	Whiskered tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	R
Coconiidae	Painted stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>	UC *	Laridae	India river tern	<i>Sterna aurantia</i>	C
Coconiidae	Black-necked stork	<i>Xenorhynchus asiaticus</i>	R*	Pteroclididae	Indian sandgrouse	<i>Pexustus</i>	UC
Coconiidae	Openbill stork	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	R	Pteroclididae	Painted sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles indicus</i>	R
Threskiornithidae	White ibis	<i>Threskiornis aethiopica</i>	C	Columbidae	Blue rock pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	VC
Threskiornithidae	Glossy ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	R	Columbidae	Indian ring dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	VC
Threskiornithidae	Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	C	Columbidae	Red turtle dove	<i>S. tranquebarica</i>	C
Phoenicopteridae	Flamingo	<i>Phoenicopterus roseus</i>	UC	Columbidae	Little brown dove	<i>S. senegalensis</i>	C
Anatidae	Greylag goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	R	Psittacidae	Roseringed parakeet	<i>P. krameri</i>	VC
Anatidae	Barheaded goose	<i>Anser indicus</i>	R	Cuculidae	Pied crested cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>	UC
Anatidae	Common Shelduck	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	R	Cuculidae	Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopacea</i>	VC
Anatidae	Lesser whistling teal	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>	C	Cuculidae	Crow-pheasant	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	C
Anatidae	Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	C	Strigidae	Great horned or eagle owl	<i>Bubo bubo</i>	R
Anatidae	Common teal	<i>A. crecca</i>	C	Strigidae	Spotted owl	<i>Athene brama</i>	VC
Anatidae	Spotbilled duck	<i>A. poecilorhyncha</i>	C	Caprimulgidae	Common Indian nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>	C
Anatidae	Mallard	<i>A. platyrhynchos</i>	UC	Apodidae	House swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	C
Anatidae	Gadwall	<i>A. strepera</i>	UC	Alcedinidae	Lesser pied kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	UC
Anatidae	Wigeon	<i>A. penelope</i>	C	Alcedinidae	Common kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	C
Anatidae	Shoveller	<i>A. clypeata</i>	C	Alcedinidae	Whitebreasted kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smymensis</i>	VC
Anatidae	Common pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	UC	Meropidae	Bluetailed bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>	C
Anatidae	White-eyed pochard	<i>A. nyroca</i>	R	Meropidae	Blue cheekd bee-eater	<i>M. spercilius</i>	R
Anatidae	Tufted duck	<i>A. fuligula</i>	C	Meropidae	Green bee-eater	<i>M. orientalis</i>	C
Anatidae	Cotton teal	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>	UC	Coraciidae	Indian roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>	C
Accipitridae	Blackwinged kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	UC	Upupidae	Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	VC
Accipitridae	Pariah kite	<i>Milvus migrans govinda</i>	C	Capitonidae	Coppersmith	<i>M. haemacephala</i>	UC
Accipitridae	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	UC	Picidae	Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	C
Accipitridae	Eastern steppe eagle	<i>Aquila rapax</i>	UC	Picidae	Lesser goldenbacked woodpecker	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>	VC
Accipitridae	Great spotted eagle	<i>A. clanga</i>	UC	Picidae	Yellowfronted pied woodpecker	<i>Picoides mahrattensis</i>	C
Accipitridae	King vulture	<i>Sarcogyps calvus</i>	R*	Alaudidae	Redwinged bush lark	<i>Mirafra erythroptera</i>	C
Accipitridae	Cinereous vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>	R*	Alaudidae	Ashycrowned finch lark	<i>Eremopterix grisea</i>	UC
Accipitridae	Griffon vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	C	Alaudidae	Rufostailed finch lark	<i>Ammomanes phoenicurus</i>	C
Accipitridae	Indian longbilled vulture	<i>Gyps indicus</i>	UC*	Alaudidae	Crested lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>	R
Accipitridae	Indian whitebacked vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>	UC*	Alaudidae	Eastern Skylark	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>	R
Accipitridae	Scavenger vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	C	Hirundinidae	Dusky crag martin	<i>Hirundo concolor</i>	C
Accipitridae	Pale-harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>	R	Hirundinidae	Plain sand martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>	R
Falconidae	Kestrel	<i>F. tinnunculus</i>	C	Hirundinidae	Wiretailed swallow	<i>H. smithii</i>	VC
Phasianidae	Grey partridge	<i>Francolinus pondicerianus</i>	VC	Hirundinidae	Indian cliff swallow	<i>H. fluvicola</i>	R
Phasianidae	Indian peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	VC	Hirundinidae	Redrumped swallow	<i>H. daurica</i>	C
Gruidae	Sarus crane	<i>Grus antigone</i>	R*	Laniidae	Grey shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	VC
Gruidae	Demoiselle crane	<i>Anthropoides virgo</i>	VC	Laniidae	Baybacked shrike	<i>L. vittatus</i>	C
Rallidae	Whitebreasted waterhen	<i>Amauromis phoenicurus</i>	C	Laniidae	Rofousbacked shrike	<i>L. schach</i>	C
Rallidae	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	VC	Dicruridae	Black drongo	<i>Dicrurus adsimilis</i>	VC
Rallidae	Purple moorhen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	UC	Sturnidae	Brahminy myna	<i>Sturnus pagodarum</i>	VC
Rallidae	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	VC	Sturnidae	Rosy pastor	<i>S. roseus</i>	C
Jacaniidae	Pheasant tailed jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>	UC	Sturnidae	Starling	<i>S. vulgaris</i>	UC
Recurvirostridae	Blackwinged stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	C	Sturnidae	Pied myna	<i>S. contra</i>	VC
Burhinidae	Stone curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>	R	Sturnidae	Common myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	VC
Charadriidae	Redwattled lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	V	Sturnidae	Bank myna	<i>A. ginginianus</i>	C
Charadriidae	Yellow-wattled lapwing	<i>V. malabaricus</i>	R	Corvidae	House crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	VC
Charadriidae	Little ringed plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	R	Corvidae	Jungle crow	<i>C. macrorhynchos</i>	C
Charadriidae	Blacktailed godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	UC	Corvidae	Raven	<i>C. corax</i>	R
Charadriidae	Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	R	Campephagidae	Common wood shrike	<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i>	C
Charadriidae	Red shank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	UC	Campephagidae	Small minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	R
Charadriidae	Green-shank	<i>T. nebularia</i>	UC				

Pycnonotidae	White cheeked bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus leucogenys</i>	C	Ploceidae	Yellowthroated sparrow	<i>Petronia xanthocollis</i>	C
Pycnonotidae	Redvented bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	VC	Ploceidae	Baya	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>	UC
Muscicapidae	Yelloweyed babbler	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>	UC	Ploceidae	Green munia	<i>Estrilda formosa</i>	R
Muscicapidae	Common babbler	<i>Turdoides caudatus</i>	C	Ploceidae	White throated munia	<i>Lonchura malabarica</i>	R
Muscicapidae	Large grey babbler	<i>T. malcolmi</i>	R	Ploceidae	Spotted munia	<i>L. punctulata</i>	UC
Muscicapidae	Redbreasted flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa parva</i>	UC	Emberizidae	Greynecked bunting	<i>Emberiza buchanani</i>	UC
Muscicapidae	Fantail flycatcher	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>	R				
Muscicapidae	Rufous fronted wren-warbler	<i>Prinia buchanani</i>	R				
Muscicapidae	Tailor bird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	C				
Muscicapidae	Indian great reed warbler	<i>Acrocephalus stentoreus</i>	C				
Muscicapidae	Desert warbler	<i>Sylvia nana</i>	R				
Muscicapidae	Lesser whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	R				
Muscicapidae	Chiff-chaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	UC				
Muscicapidae	Rufous chat	<i>Erythropgia galactotes</i>	R				
Muscicapidae	Bluethroat	<i>Erithacus svecicus</i>	UC				
Muscicapidae	Black redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	C				
Muscicapidae	Brown rock chat	<i>Cercomela fusca</i>	VC				
Muscicapidae	Pied bush chat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>	C				
Muscicapidae	Desert wheatear	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i>	C				
Muscicapidae	Pied chat	<i>O. picata</i>	R				
Muscicapidae	Indian robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i>	VC				
Motacillidae	Tawny pipit	<i>A. campestris</i>	UC				
Motacillidae	Tree pipit	<i>A. trivialis</i>	R				
Motacillidae	Yellow wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	C				
Motacillidae	Yellowheaded wagtail	<i>M. citreola</i>	VC				
Motacillidae	Grey wagtail	<i>M. cinerea</i>	C				
Motacillidae	White wagtail	<i>M. alba</i>	UC				
Motacillidae	Large pied wagtail	<i>M. maderaspatensis</i>	C				
Nectariniidae	Purple sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>	VC				
Zosteropidae	White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosa</i>	C				
Ploceidae	Indian house sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus indicus</i>	VC				

R – Rare; UC – Uncommon; C – Common; VC – Very common

* - Listed in threatened birds of the world (IUCN red list – 2000)

Acknowledgement :

I would like to thank Prof. S.M. Mohnot, Director, Indo-US Primate Project, Dr. A. Purohit, Head, Dr. L.S. Rajpurohit, Department of Zoology, J.N.V. University, Jodhpur for their support. Thanks are due to the State Forest Department staff and officials of Jodhpur. I am thankful to Mr. Mayank, Tejveer and Bundu Khan for their help during computation of this work.

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A Trip to Kutch in North East Gujarat

SNEHAL PATEL, Nature Club Surat, 81, Sarjan Society, Surat 395 007

Last month a few members of our club visited the grasslands of north east Gujarat. We had read a lot about the bird life of this area. The train journey took us through the region of the worst affected area of 26th January earthquake. Lots of villages were still in ruins, one can see tents pitched all over the place.

The trip from Bhuj onwards was by jeep. Due to good rainfall this year the area was lush green and the climate was pleasant. There are very few trees in this area, mainly date palms.

The grasslands were absolutely plain with about 50 cm high grass, scanning with binoculars we could spot the great Indian bustard one of the most endangered birds of our country. Its long white neck was projecting out from the green grass about 500m away. The excitement among us was greater than any of our earlier birding experience.

In the two hours before it got dark on the first day of our birding in this grassland we could not believe that we saw nine great Indian bustards, four males and five females. One of the males had a very long white pouch on the neck, which was almost touching the ground. The females were busy looking for insects in the fields. At one place we saw five birds at a time.

The other interesting bird we saw on this day was black partridge. I would rather call this a black beauty, What a wonderful bird ! always seen giving out calls from a high land mark which can be

a tree top, mud embankment or hedge too. It was a very wonderful call which we could easily tape (will be recorded in our volume III of Indian bird calls) with a parabola disc. The grassland was full of birds, insects and butterflies.

The presence of lesser florican was indicated by the sound we heard of its wing beating. To see the florican one has to locate the direction from which the sound 'TER -R-R' is coming and keep looking for about 5 minutes. Suddenly a very sleek bird with long neck will come vertically up about one meter from the green grass and fall back at the same place. It is like a child jumping on a trampoline and screaming with joy. We have observed that when the florican jumps, its face is always towards the direction from which the wind is blowing. I presume this is essential for the bird to keep itself in balance during the high jumps.

I had seen this bird earlier in Sailane Sanctuary, M.P. Recently there was a report of this sanctuary being denotified as half of the grassland is now under cultivation. The first day of our bird watching ended observing a moth, which used to hover like a humming bird and suck nectar from flowers, unlike the butterflies which have to land, and then suck the nectar. The moth's large eyes shined like amber. It had a pink glow when the beam of a torch light was reflected in it. The moth's hovering flight kept us watching them till midnight. Later at home it was identified as the humming bird moth.

Next morning we went for birdwatching in the Narayan Sarovar area, here the area being saline and with the sea nearby we saw plovers, stints, curlews and blackwinged stilts. It had started raining and the dirt road got muddy, also from morning the jeep had its battery down and it was a push start vehicle. Our bird watching had been restricted to roadside birdwatching due to rain. Although the road had very little traffic we saw dead bodies of hedgehog, nightjar, common babbler, small Indian civet and a ribbon snake (which was completely flattened and has ended up in our Natural History Museum). The same day we saw a Baluchistan grey shrike for the first time. The bird was sitting on a dead road side tree just 30 feet away. We observed it for more than 10 minutes as it should not be here according to IG. The details of this bird were noted and on reaching home, we referred in Handbook and found that it was indeed a Baluchistan grey shrike. The other interesting birds were flocks of whimbrels and sandgrouses. We also enjoyed observing the singing bush lark, hovering about 50 feet above our head and uninterruptedly singing very sweet songs. One can listen to this in Nature Club Surat's call of Indian Birds volume II.

On the third day we went back to the grassland but it was muddy and the jeep used to skid. Occasionally we had to push it out. In between we saw two bustards gradually moving around in a field and at the same time we were lucky to see a florican making its

ritual jumps in the background of the two majestic birds. In the binocular's field of vision there were this two bustards and the florican slightly behind hopping up occasionally. It was a thrilling sight to see the two endangered birds in the same view. Very poor light and rain did not allow us to freeze this memorable view on film. Behind us about 300 m. away we could see the long neck of a male bustard above the green grass. Its body was below grass level. The horizon had dark rain clouds which gave a dramatic look to the whiteness of the birds.

Back into the jeep and skidding around it landed in a ditch. We just missed toppling on the side. Our half an hour effort could not push it out. All this was being watched by a giant bluebull male (he looked more black than blue) from a safe distance. After some time he suddenly jumped and started running. We could not understand this move, but shortly after we saw a white animal like an overgrown alsatian dog watching us from behind a bush and then started moving in the direction in which the bluebull moved. It took some time for us to realise that we were watching a wolf !. This was our first wolf sighting in life and that too in the wild.

Time was running out as we had to reach back to catch our train. Jeep did not want to move. We had to abandon it and started walking to the nearest roadhead about 10 kms. away.



Pattern and Nesting period of Indian Skimmer in National Chambal Sanctuary

RAJEEV CHAUHAN, Secretary General, Society for Conservation of Nature, 576, Karamganj, Punjabi Colony, Etawah 206 001, Uttar Pradesh, India

The Indian skimmer (*Rynchops albicollis*) is a resident species of larger rivers in northern and central India, particularly the Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra and Godavari river systems (Ali 1996). Indian Skimmer is a globally threatened species (Grimmett *et al.* 1998) and under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Recently, ecological studies have not been conducted on this species, and information is present only as sighting records (e.g. Sangha *et al.* 1998, Kaur 1999, Sundar 2000). Flocking pattern and nesting season of Indian skimmers in National Chambal Sanctuary (NCS) will be discussed in this note.

I visited NCS irregularly between 1996 to 2001, covering the area from Pinahat to Shergarh Ghat, a stretch of about 165 km along the river Chambal and 50 km along the river Yamuna, both major tributaries of the Ganges, under a project funded by the Council of Science and Technology (Narain & Chauhan 1999). For survey, motor boat, row boat and motor bike were used. Whenever Indian skimmers were encountered, number of individuals, location, habitat and nesting (if nest observed) were noted.

In five years, 31 flocks were recorded, with flock size varying between four to 248 individuals (mean 70.58 ± 73.13 (SD)). Flock size of Indian skimmer was significantly different in winter and summer ($\chi^2=5$, $df=1$, $p<0.05$). Nesting was seen to occur between April and June.

They were using small to large sandbars or islands for roosting and small to large islands for nesting. River Chambal was famous for sand, Pinahat, Jawra Ghat, Kyonri Ghat, Nandgawan, Murong, Baroli, Barai and Udi Ghat were famous for sand mining, so many islands were found at that time. As the sand mining stopped since

1998, no islands were formed. This reduced the nesting habitat for skimmers. Predators come easily on connected sandbars, and hence skimmers do not prefer sandbars for nesting. After 1998, islands were observed below the confluence, or at the confluence, of Yamuna and Chambal rivers, which were used by skimmers for nesting. Now it is an urgent need to study the impact of sand mining on the nesting habitat of Indian skimmers.

Dams, barrages and water upliftment projects are causes of water scarcity in rivers. Confluences are deep with plenty of fish, and the water flow helps to make islands in these areas. Food availability is known to be a principal cause for flocking in birds (Newton 1998) and it may be the reason for flocking in Indian skimmers. According to Grimmett *et al.* (1998), nesting in Indian skimmers occurs from March to May, while here it occurred upto June. This may be possibly due to geographical location.

Acknowledgement

These observations were carried out while doing field work for the project funded by CST (U.P.) Lucknow to Dr. S. Narain. Permits to visit the Sanctuary were kindly given by Chief Wildlife Warden, U.P. Thanks are due to the Sanctuary staff for their cooperation and help during the field work, and to K. S. Gopi Sundar for discussion and literature.

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CORRESPONDENCE

SIGHTING OF VULTURES. A.M.K. Bharos, B-101, Gayathrinagar, PO : Shankernagar, Raipur CG. 492 007

The Indian white backed vulture (*Gyps benghalensis*) and other vultures have become so rare that, they have totally disappeared from certain areas, even in this region, and sighting of even a solitary bird, causes a lot of excitement.

In the recent past following sightings were recorded:

On 7 October 2001 a gathering of 18 birds was observed soaring near village Shirpur, Baghnadi, situated on Raipur – Nagpur road (NH-6). This gathering comprised 18 birds, out of which, 16 were Indian whitebacked vultures, a king vulture and one was possibly an Indian longbilled vulture. They were moving away and a few of them were in the process of descending, suggesting the presence of a carcass and more birds there.

Earlier in the month of March 2001, during survey of IBA sites, a nesting colony of Indian whitebacked vultures, with four active nests was located, near village Rampur inside Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary, in Raipur district. CG. Around this locality a gathering of 16 / 17 birds is regularly seen.

NOTES ON ADJUTANT STORKS AND BARHEADED GEESE IN NORTH KARNATKA. Gurunath Desai, 1st floor, 31, Ashok Nagar, Hubli 580 032

Adjutant Stork at Honnapur Tank

On Saturday the 9th December 2001, I with my birder friend Mr. Prakash Tonshal were on a preliminary survey of migratory waterfowl of Dharwad and Haveri districts. At 11.00 a.m. while surveying Honnappur tank (Haveri Dist. 35 km. from Hubli), I spotted a solitary lesser Adjutant stork (*Leptoptilos javanicus*). Since this was my first sighting of this highly endangered species, to be absolutely certain, I referred to Salim Ali's Book of Indian birds and confirmed the field characters. Zooming in my Samsung binoculars, I noted the glossy metallic back, white underparts and yellow leathery neck.

The lesser adjutant is a rather ugly looking bird with an air of perpetual sadness about it. Oldtime birders recall that a solitary lesser adjutant used to be spotted infrequently around Honnapur lake. With that in mind I had kept searching for this stork for the past 5 years.

I observed the stork from a distance of 50m. but could not distinguish whether it was in breeding or non-breeding plumage. It was feeding on the margins of the lake. Keeping it company were a flock of 14 painted storks. Coot, cotton teal, dabchick, bronzewing jacana, small blue kingfisher, pied kingfisher were the other birds seen at the lake.

Drying up important wetlands in North Karnataka

Continuing our survey we then visited the Naregal & Heggari tank in Haveri district. Both these tanks are very famous for attracting large congregations of migratory birds. Barheaded geese, brahminy duck, shoveller, common pochard, common teal, tufted pochard, gadwall, wigeon, garganey are the waterfowl that take refuge in these lakes during winter along with other shore birds like common sandpiper, wood sand piper, black tailed godwit, snipes, stilts and wagtails. This year due to failure of monsoon all these lakes have dried up, resulting in the non-arrival of wintering waterfowl.

With great sadness we watched the dried up bottom of Naregal lake. Ever an optimist and not one to lose heart, I scanned the other end of the lake only to be greeted by the spectacular sight of demoiselle cranes roosting in the afternoon. The demoiselle is one of the most elegant and charming cranes. The V formation flight of the demoiselle is indeed a sight to behold.

Barheaded geese at Magadi

On 12th December 2001, I received a phone call from Shri Vijay Mohan Raj, DCF, Gadag, requesting our birding group to be present at Magadi lake to take the winter census. Accompanied by Mr. Prakesh Tonshal, we arrived at the lake on 16th December 2001, at 10.00 a.m. After the dismal scenario at Naregal & Heggari lake we were not expecting much from Magadi lake, so it was a pleasant surprise to be greeted by three large flocks of bar headed geese. Proceeding to the other side of the lake we spotted 6 brahminy ducks and 3 common teals feeding in the lake. A long and narrow earthen embankment built by the forest dept. was the perching post for a flock of black ibis (41 Nos.) and 3 river terns, 3 open billed storks, 6 comb ducks (no adult males with prominent comb) 40 cattle egrets, 3 wooly necked storks were also using this embankment as their perching place.

We started our annual ritualistic barheaded geese count and abandoned the exercise as counting individual birds would take most of our time. Instead, using block method we estimated the population to be 3000 +. We were told that the number swells to 6000 + in the evenings. The high number of barheaded geese this year is attributed to the concentration of these geese at Magadi lake due to the drying up of Naregal tank, their traditional haunt.

Magadi lake has two interesting points to note. It is like any other village lake with typical profile and vegetation. Yet there is complete absence of little grebes, one of our commonest birds in all village tanks. Another point of interest is the absence of wintering waders (a few littleringed plovers and single snipe) in spite of having a gradually receding lake shore with soft and moist mud, grasslands, islands and sandbars habitat which are conducive for waders.

Shree Vijay Mohan Raj the dynamic DCF of Gadag has put in considerable effort towards conservation of this wetland. He is actively interacting with the local Yuva Mandal who are evincing much interest in the lake and the birds therein. This augurs well for the birds.

The forest dept. has made a mini-garden and has put benches for the avid birdwatchers and for the benefit of laymen put up a large board with painting and description of the birds visiting Magadi. Wish we had more officers like Vijay Mohan !

COMMENTS ON THE NEWSLETTER. Aasheesh Pittie, 8-2-545 Road No. 7, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad 500034, India

The Newsletter for September-October 2001, Vol.41, No. 5 arrived yesterday. As usual, very enjoyable and informative.

Snehal Patel's article, on birdwatching in Gujarat, makes great reading. I have witnessed similar behaviour of Yellow-wattled lapwings near Hyderabad. They just won't get off the road. I wonder what the reason is Snehal's pictures of drongo perched on sheep might make an interesting cover for a future issue of the Newsletter.

Ameen Ahmed and Harish Bhat's article is very well written. Yet I wonder whether their use of "rain forest," "evergreen forest slopes" and "moist deciduous forest", to describe the same tract of habitat is correct.

R.N. Desai and G.S. Kallur's note on birds of Dharward records the sighting of "Nine adult great whitebellied herons along with four purple herons. (2A + 2Juv)". I have my reservations about this identification <*Ardea insignis*> has a distribution in NE India. A solitary record from Point Calimere by Sugathan et al., (1987, JBNHS 84(1): 206-207) also seems doubtful to me, even though they say that, "While driving along the Eastern side of the sanctuary Dr. Salim Ali identified one bird among a mixed flock of egrets and grey herons at a drying water hole as <*Ardea insignis*>. During 1983 December again it was recorded". Is it presumptuous to deduce that Salim Ali would have published that record had he been really confident about it? They were after all driving past the mixed flock when they saw the bird, which is not an easy situation for identification. The authors of the present paper should try and be extra vigilant for this species (as other birders in that area) in future. Dr. Uttangi's comments on this might shed some light.

S. S. Mahesh's short communication on Blackheaded Munias in Bareilly has me foxed. According to Compact Handbook (Ali & Ripley, 1987) these birds should have black under tail coverts. Mahesh reports them as "deep reddish brown" on the two birds he saw. If the birds he saw had been dyed, then the white of the breast and sides would also have taken the colour. This does not seem to be the case. Is there an intermediate plumage between that of the juvenile and the adult that has not been recorded before?

LAST CALL OF THE PARADISE FLYCATCHER.

Dr. Arunachalam Kumar, Kasturba Medical College, P.O. Box 53, Light House Hill Road, Mangalore 575001

A solitary paradise flycatcher that frequented my fish pond in Mangalore, for well nigh eleven years, thrice a day, everyday, except during the monsoons, has disappeared now. This year post-monsoon, the return of the bird has not occurred. The bird, a prize specimen of the species, sported long streamers, and had made itself quite adept at modulating the residential movement time table to suit its aquatic sorties. So familiar was it with the residents, that it would quite boldly announce its arrival, and follow its ritualistic bathing exercise, even in the presence of my Rajapalayam dogs standing six to ten feet away. The family was allowed even closer, and we could sit on the fishpond's ledge while it dived and chirruped to hearts content.

Any number of visitors to my home have been witness to the antics of the bird, which on occasions appeared to play games with the dogs. The requirement of the bird was that one of us, restrain the hound by holding its collar, whilst the bird went about its ablutions. Once or twice the bird would chase the dog away from elsewhere towards us, so that the dog could be held. Over the years I have attempted to photograph the bird, but bad camera and poor cameramanship ruined my efforts. Last May, the premonsoon of 2001, I managed to snap the bird from hardly 5 feet away. Little did I reckon then, that this was the last call of the grand bird. The developed film sent here was taken then.

The Paradise had seen my infant daughter grow from a toddler to a temperamental teenager, has watched me graduate from a two wheeler to a car, seen our house metamorphose under yuppie influence, from a derelict old tile roofed tenement to a nattily maintained cottage, it had seen the advent and exit of Great Danes, Boxers and Dacshunds, and succeeded in 'educating' my Rajapalayams into becoming bird-dogs of a more genial kind. Every day I wait, for the tell-tale chirrups but I hear them no more. Gone is the bird, its tail leaving a divine ethereal signature in my garden.

AN ALL - BLACK CROW PHEASANT. Dr. Arunachalam Kumar, Kasturba Medical College, P.O. Box 53, Light House Hill Road, Mangalore 575001

A dense patch of shrubbery that abuts my Mangalore residence, has despite the rapaciousness of city developers, remained isolated and undiscovered. This verdant Eden has given me a plethora of data on urban avifaunal wealth, material sufficient enough for me to write regularly on a sighting or two of note to the Newsletter or other internet based natural history sites. On 19th Dec, 2001, at around 11A.M. I saw a large clumsy bird hip-hopping on the low shrubs. The bird was unmistakably a crow-pheasant (*C. sinensis*) or coucal. The size, shape and fidgetty movements, fanning tail and tip-over gait, all tell tale identification markers for the coucal; what was astounding about the bird, was that it was entirely black in colour! No chestnut hued wings - all black!

Quite flummoxed, I put the sighting on the net, and pronto, I had a call from Mr. S.A. Hussain (BNHS and 'vulture scarcity-my foot' fame) a wellwisher and guide, who schooled me on some information, that *inter alia*, confirmed my observations fitted with the rare but known melanistic morphs in cuculiformes.

NESTING BEHAVIOUR OF PAINTED STORKS. Harish R. Bhat, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore 560 012

Kaggaladu, a small village in Tumkur district has gained attention of many bird watchers and nature lovers for having seasonal visitors "painted storks" since four years. This was my second visit to the area and I was with my friend Dr. Ameen Ahmed of Wildlife Aware Nature Club to see how many painted storks have visited and are breeding currently. The villagers have great affection towards these seasonal visitors and encourage their visiting, giving less priority for their income from tamarind.

It was a very picturesque sight to see hundreds of painted storks gathering on five strong and sturdy tamarind trees in the midst of the human habitation. Some of them were feeding their chicks with fish and a few others were incubating their eggs. It was indeed

nice to see some of them taking a great turn, high on the sky and slowly perching on their respective nest-bearing branches. There were grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*) in few numbers on the same tree. My attention was dragged by one of the painted storks (male) which was sitting on a Portia tree (*Thespesia populnea*) and trying to cut off the leaf-bearing twig with its powerful broad beak. I watched carefully as it cut the twig and flew to its nest on the tamarind tree. There was a female stork, which grabbed the twig from the male's beak, put it down inside the nest and spread it with its feet. This behavior was observed with other individuals too! Some of them would gather dry twigs, branches from the nearby crop field and trees by exactly measuring the size of the twig with its beak. This kind of behavior was quite interesting as they were strengthening their nests with the available materials nearby with much care and selection. The sun was setting and the birds were gathering at their nests, which made us realize that we had to return home.

The following is a list of the different plant materials, which they selected for building their nest :

Source of plant materials (twigs, leaves and branches) used for building the nest:

Species	Common name	Family
<i>Tamarindus indicus</i>	Tamarind	Cesalpiniaceae
<i>Ficus religiosa</i>	Peepal	Moraceae
<i>Thespesia populnea</i>	Portia tree	Malvaceae
<i>Samanea saman</i>	Rain tree	Mimosaceae
<i>Prosopis spicigera</i>		Mimosaceae
<i>Azadirachta indica</i>	Neem	Meliaceae
<i>Pongamia glabra</i>	Indian Beech	Fabaceae
<i>Cajanus cajan</i>	Pigeon pea	Fabaceae
<i>Sorghum vulgare</i>	Jowar	Poaceae
<i>Celosia argentea</i>	Prince's feathers	Amarantaceae

ENJOYING BIRDS. Pragati Nayak, "Aashirwad", Sampe, Aryapu Post, Puttur Taluk, D.K 574210, Karnataka

On the ninth of this month, Dec, 01. I observed three small birds foraging on the ground behind my house. I was able to identify them easily from having seen a picture of them in Collins Handguide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent. Identified them as Black-headed babblers.

Their behaviour was typically babbler like - tossing and turning leaves on the ground and hopping about, all the while churring. When I went home to read up about them, I was surprised that the bird has not even been mentioned in Salim Ali's Book of Indian Birds (Centenary Ed.). In the Collins Handguide, it states that the bird is very common in Sri Lanka and in the lowland and hill forests of W and SW India. It keeps to thick undergrowth in ravines and along streams in evergreen forests. The vegetation around my

house can be described as lightly wooded deciduous, so I wonder what these birds were doing here. Could these birds have come from cooler evergreen forests to spend winter in the warmer climate here ? I would like to know if other birdwatchers have seen this bird in this area (D.K. district of Karnataka) at this time, and also if, they see it regularly in winter. This is the first winter I have seen these birds here. I did not see them the next Sunday (16th) and neither on the following Sunday (23rd) but on Christmas day I did see them again. They were foraging in the same place as before and there were three of them.

This winter, paradise flycatchers are conspicuous by their absence. I generally see several near my house between December and February, but so far this winter I haven't spotted a single one.

BIRDS IN SARISKA. Lt. General Baljit Singh, House 219, Sector 16 A, Chandigarh 160 015

Dr. A. K. Gupta's account of his visit to the Sariska Tiger Reserve (NLBW Vol. 41, No. 5, Sept.-Oct. 2001 page 69) instantly put me on the "fast-reverse" memory mode crowded with wildlife encounters there. But I was intrigued where he talks about two birds, near, Alwar town, on the mud boundary wall of a kutch house which he presumed to be either the Houbara or the lesser florican. I have spent countless number of days and nights in and around Alwar and in the Sariska Tiger Reserve between 1985-89, in an uninterrupted spell but had no such sightings.

The Houbara had been strictly a winter visitor to Pakistan from its breeding areas mostly in Iran. Some birds did reach as far West as what is now Rajasthan and Punjab. So far as Punjab is concerned, the Houbaras were never seen after 1950 (certainly not in the traditional shooting areas). A few birds were reported from here and there upto the 1960s in a narrow fringe of western Rajasthan contiguous to the Pakistan border. I doubt if the Houbaras were ever spotted in Alwar; not even in the days of abundance and for sure never after the 1970s. Remember Alwar is a mere 170 kms from Delhi.

Yes, the lesser florican was common to and a favoured game-bird in parts of Punjab and most of Rajasthan. This was so till the 1950s, diminished rapidly by the 1960s and I doubt if it was seen at all thereafter. I heard of their last sighting in Dec. 1948 on a Christmas shoot in what is now the Bathinda district of Punjab. They were so wary of humans that using camels and horses as a ruse it was always an exacting task to get a few birds driven to fly over the line of concealed guns.

There is just no way that either of these two species of birds would enter human habitation of the kind narrated by Dr. Gupta. My guess is that what he saw were two broody hens who usually put their tails up fanlike (a la Laka pigeons) in protest when disturbed from their brooding corners in village huts.

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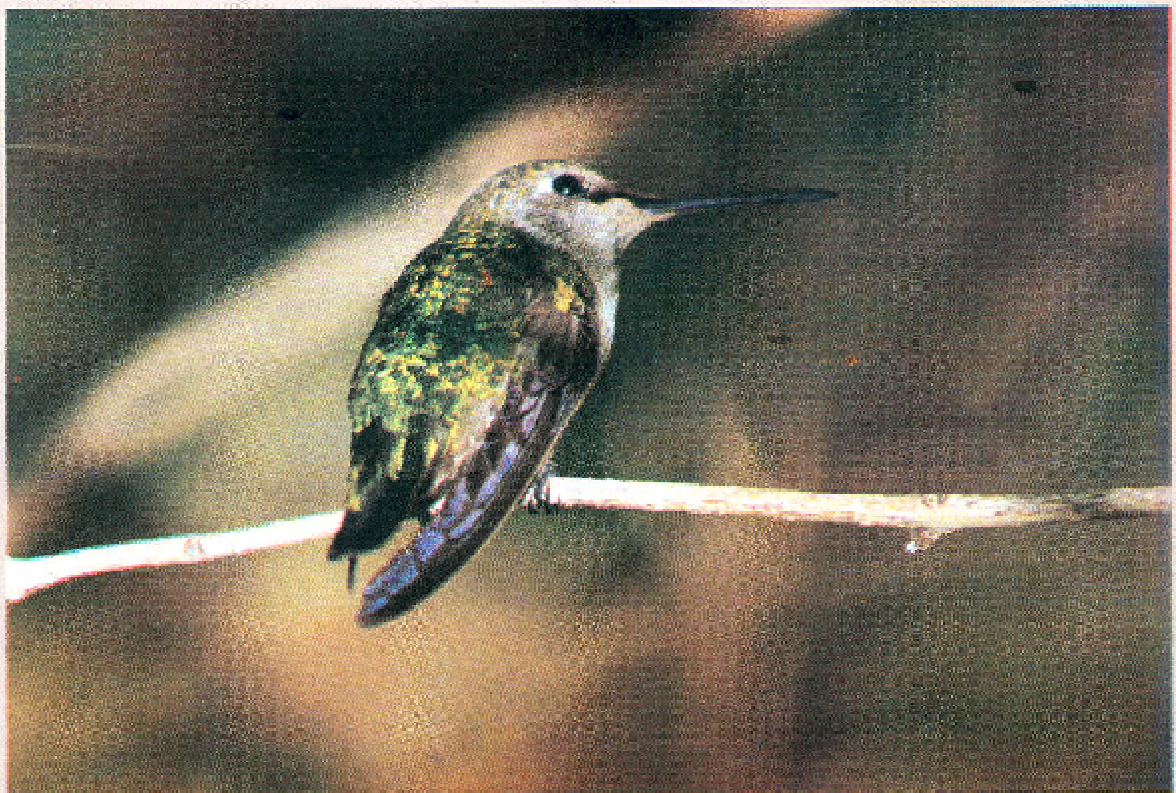
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Cover : Male **Great-tailed Grackle** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*). A large grackle with iridescent black with purple sheen on head, back and under parts. This grackle has a long keel-shaped tail and golden yellow eyes. Occurs in open flatlands, with scattered trees, marshes and wetlands in south-western states of North America. The calls include clear whistles and loud *clacks*. This bird has been rapidly expanding its range northwards as well as westwards. Photographed near its nest in Arizona in April.

Photo : S. Sridhar, ARPS

Newsletter for Birdwatchers

Vol. 42	No.3	May-June 2002
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Standardized English and Scientific Names of the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent - 2002

By Ranjit Manakadan & Aasheesh Pittie

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EDITORIAL

"In 1990 the International Ornithological Congress, in its search for agreement for a standardized, worldwide list of English common names for birds, decided to use 'Distribution and Taxonomy of Birds of the World' by C.G. Sibley and B.L. Monroe as a basis for discussion" (Pittie & Robertson, 1993). Realising the import of this decision, Andrew Robertson and I compiled a small booklet, *Nomenclature of Birds of the Indian Sub-continent. A Review of Some Changes Taking Place*, which was published in 1993 by the now defunct Ornithological Society of India. In it were listed and English and Scientific names extant at that time in India, and those that were being proposed by Sibley & Monroe (1990). The book did not find much favour among Indian ornithologists and I was in fact once accused of trying to upset the apple cart of English bird names by introducing new ones! Since then, the Oriental Bird Club (OBC) came out with their *Annotated Checklist* (Inskipp et al, 1996), Grimmett, Inskipp and Inskipp with *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent* in 1998, and Kazmierczak with his "*Field Guide*" in 2000. All these books had new English names with which Indian birdwatchers were totally unfamiliar.

In our *Nomenclature* book, Andrew and I made two remarkably dichotomous statements. "Birds are no respecters of our artificial political boundaries, and calling them by different names in different countries should not become an issue of nationalism. It hinders ornithology generally and leads birdwatchers into confusion" and, "Common names...in any language but most importantly in English, are largely governed by traditional usage, differing from place to place, and by subjective opinion and personal preference." That book gently nudged the Indian birdwatcher towards preparing himself for the impending changes in the forthcoming field guides, "we will be better able to make good use of them (the new names) if already at least partly adjusted to changes that have taken place." Now I disagree.

Who does the standardized, worldwide list of English bird names benefit? It is definitely useful to the globetrotting birdwatcher, whose tribe increases daily—indeed a good thing. These people prefer books with standardized bird names so that during their travels, there will be no confusion about the English name of a species. But, as everybody knows, there is already a fine system in place to do just that, the Linnaean system of nomenclature, with its unique arrangement of binomial scientific names. To say that those who bird-watch for joy do not really care about the scientific name is to simplify the issue into negation.

Change that benefits everybody is good. But change for the sake of change is another thing. The globalisation of bird names impoverishes the unique culture, history, character and literature, the very fabric, of a nation's ornithological history. Indian English names of birds are as cherished by us as are American English names by the Americans and UK English names by the British. Ultimately a lot of confusion has resulted from these changes and papers are submitted to newsletters and journals with varying English names of birds.

In view of this, the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), for long the only source of quality, authoritative ornithological literature in India, decided to bring out a standardized list of English bird names that could be used by Indian birdwatchers and institutions concerned with nature and nature conservation. The ENVIS Centre at BNHS was given this task and Ranjit Manakadan set about it in such a way that, ornithologists and birdwatchers across India were consulted, before the names were finalised. Inevitably, such an exercise requires the choosing of a single name from amongst various available. A difficult task for it does not necessarily please some. I added the complete scientific binomials to these names, realizing that this was an opportunity to put together a

slim and portable checklist of the birds of the Indian subcontinent. This list was published in *Buceros* the newsletter of the ENVIS Centre at BNHS (Manakadan & Pittie, 2001), of which some 400 copies were distributed to individuals and institutions.

Since the publication of that paper, changes in scientific binomials have been suggested by David & Gosselin (2002) to ensure gender agreement of avian species names. Three taxa from the Indian list are affected at the specific level. These are: Small Blue Kingfisher *Ceyx erithacus* (Linnaeus, 1758), which must be spelt *C. erithacus*; Crimson-throated Barbet *Megalaima rubricapilla* (Gmelin, 1788), which must be spelt *M. rubricapillus* and, Brown Prinia *Prinia criniger* Hodgson, 1836, which must be spelt *P. crinigera*. Suitable adjustments have now been made in this list to accommodate these changes. Some value addition has also been done to the list being presented here. The threatened status of Indian birds (BirdLife International 2001) has been incorporated with suitable abbreviations and those endemic to India are also indicated. Species that are globally threatened or near-threatened are also marked, after Kazmierczak (2000) who follows Collar, et al (1994).

For the efficacy of these English names it is necessary that they be circulated as widely as possible. Realising this, Mr Zafar Futehally, the editor of the *Newsletter*, readily allowed the use of this entire issue for this checklist so that it is made available to readers as a single document, for which Ranjit and I are both truly grateful.

Aasheesh Pittie

June 15, 2002

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Edward Dickinson, for his unstinting help and sound advice, over a fortnight of intense exchange of e-mails in September-October 2001. He needs no introduction, but for those new to birdwatching and ornithology, a couple of lines about him would be pertinent. Edward Dickinson is the co-author (along with Ben King and Martin Woodcock) of the highly successful *A Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia* published in 1975 by Collins and is the editor of the revised edition of Richard Howard and Alick Moore's *A Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World*, which is due for publication in 2002 by Academic Press. He is also the Honorary Secretary of the Trust for Oriental Ornithology.

Alan P. Peterson maintains a phenomenal website on *Nomenclature and Taxonomy* and was quick to respond to queries. Those interested in birds, the history of bird study and the taxonomy of birds, should visit his website <<http://www.zoconomen.net>>. It is a treasure house of information.

Murray Bruce for his unhesitating, succinct inputs and clarifications about elusive authors, dates of publication, and other ornithological trivia, so essential in establishing taxonomic facts.

Krys Kazmierczak and Mike Crosby also helped in many ways.

INTRODUCTION

Common (English) names of birds have been a subject of heated debate in recent times due to the proposal of standardising their use throughout the world. Antagonists argue against the need for standardisation of common names, as there are scientific names to clarify what species of bird is being referred to. They also cite the antiquity, history and cultural tradition of existing names in favour of preserving them.

However, there have been major changes in the classification and systematics of birds in the past decade, primarily through DNA analysis, resulting in changes in bird taxonomy and therefore in the common and scientific names of birds. The recent arrival of new field guides on the Indian birding scenario with new common names created chaos for birders who were familiar with the old names. Some examples are the use of Dollarbird for Broad-billed Roller (*Eurystomus orientalis*), Indian Silverbill for White-throated Munia (*Lonchura malabarica*) and Woolly-necked Stork for White-necked Stork (*Ciconia episcopus*).

In addition, many new species have been added to the Indian checklist since the publication of Ali & Ripley's (1968-1975) *Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan* (and its following editions), considered the Bible of Indian Ornithology. Another moot point for reassessment of our common names is that the *Handbook* used common names for subspecies, which was superfluous and unnecessary as distinguishing subspecies is generally impossible in the field. For example, *Neophron percnopterus percnopterus* is called the Egyptian Vulture, while *N. p. ginginianus*, Indian Scavenger Vulture.

All these factors point to the need for a new bird list for the Indian subcontinent. We would have liked to restrict our views to India, and not the Indian subcontinent - so as not to impose our views on our neighbours, but then ornithologists tend to look at the Indian region as one geographical entity, and not as political units - nor do birds recognise political barriers.

We at the ENVIS Centre, after some amount of deliberation on the subject through interaction with Indian and foreign ornithologists (see *Bucconis* Vol.2, No.4 and

Vol.3, No.2) and based on the feedback obtained, decided to bring out an official non-annotated checklist of the birds of the Indian region with standardised English and scientific names, and this publication is the result. The List covers c. 1300 species that occur (or probably occur) in the Indian subcontinent (i.e., India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and the Maldives), and will be adopted in all future ornithological publications of the BNHS. We make a fervent request to all Indian governmental and non-governmental organisations concerned with avian research and conservation to follow this List for the common and scientific names of Indian birds.

Notes on the scientific nomenclature

The family sequence of the checklist follows Morony *et al.* (1975) with subsequent changes, as accessed on 6/7/2001 from BirdLife International (2001) World Bird Database. Version 1.0. The scientific binomials follow Inskipp *et al.* (1996). Subsequent changes follow Kazmierczak (2000).

Ripley (1982) was the primary source for citation references, for the complete scientific name of a species, comprising of its binomen, the author who described it first and the date (year) when that description was published. For those binomials where Ripley did not give a full citation (as a rule, all nominate races not found in the Subcontinent), the website <<http://www.zoconomen.net>>, maintained by Alan P. Peterson M.D., was widely consulted and was the second source of reference. The third major reference used was Baker (1922-1930). Every binomen from the World Checklist, relevant to our List, was first checked with that in Ripley (1982) and then verified with the binomen on the Zoconomen website. If there were discrepancies between these two, then Baker (1922-1930) was consulted. All such problems were discussed with Edward Dickinson (see *Acknowledgements*), and his decision was accepted as the final verdict.

There are substantial macro level changes in the List when compared with Ripley's (1982) work, i.e., in the sequential arrangement of families and some changes in genus and/or species. There are also micro level differences in citations, years, authors or publications. In

keeping with the nature of this work, the sources of these micro level changes are not cited in this document. Persons interested in complete citations may write to the BNHS for details.

It should be emphasized that "In the field of taxonomy, there will always be a divergence of opinion and controversy, and many specialists will disagree with the treatment given to some of the species... but all such taxonomic reviews are becoming increasingly indispensable even to the so-called 'field worker', and human understanding often advances more surely where there has been some controversy" (Roberts 1983).

The guidelines by which we decided the common names are as follows:

Retain the traditional English names for Indian birds as far as possible, e.g., retain Great Indian Bustard *Ardeotis nigriceps* (vs. Indian Bustard), White-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* (vs. Woolly-necked Stork) and golden backed woodpeckers (vs. flamebacks). However, in spite of our intention of retaining traditional names, we have had to accept some new names on the following grounds:

- * To correct wrong or inaccurate descriptive names, e.g., accepting qualifiers of *Red-capped* or *Red-crowned*, instead of *Red-headed*, when only top of the head is red.
- * To ensure the name is applicable to all the races of a species, e.g., *Pica pica* has a black-rumped subspecies (*bottanensis*), hence the old name White-rumped Magpie is definitely inappropriate and rejected. Its new name Black-billed Magpie suits both the races. On these grounds, we also reject the now name Rufous-vented Prinia for *Prinia burnesii*, as the eastern race does not have rufous on the vent.
- * To account for 'splits' (i.e., former subspecies upgraded to species level) or 'lumps' (i.e., former species now regarded as races of some other species) as a result of taxonomic changes. An example of a 'split' is the Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix*. The former race *japonica* of this species is now regarded as a distinct species and has been named Japanese Quail *Coturnix japonica*. An example of a 'lump' is *Hirundo obsoleta* (Pale Crag Martin), earlier treated as a distinct species (as in our checklist), but now proposed by some as a race of the Rock Martin *Hirundo fuligula*.

- * To add essential qualifiers in the case of species which have been known only by the group names, e.g., Buzzard *Buteo buteo* to Common Buzzard, Megapode *Megapodius nicobariensis* to Nicobar Megapode, Bamboo Partridge *Bambusicola fyichii* to Mountain Bamboo-Partridge and Peacock-Pheasant *Polyplectron bicalcaratum* to Grey Peacock-Pheasant.

- * To add essential qualifiers for species that have counterparts in other countries, e.g., Shoveller *Anas clypeata* is changed to Northern Shoveller, Pintail *A. acuta* to Northern Pintail, Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* to Eurasian Wryneck and Koel *Eudynamys scolopacea* to Asian Koel.

- * To add group names (i.e., the collective name, usually for the genus of a species) to accompany the species name, e.g., Coppersmith Barbet for Coppersmith. This makes the name more informative. However, we have refrained from adding group names to species whose name has been adopted from local languages (e.g. Chukor, Shikra, Sakar and Laggar), or, have had traditionally stand alone names in English literature (e.g., Mallard, Fieldfare, Redwing and Brambling).

- * To rectify cases where a species is 'wrongly' placed under a group name, e.g., the group name francolin is more appropriate than partridge for the species of the genus *Francolinus*. Some of the wheatears have been incorrectly called chats in our bird books. Change of Sirkeer Cuckoo to Sirkeer Malkoha and Brahminy Myna to Brahminy Starling are good examples of correcting names in keeping with their generic affinity.

However, sometimes, we have to stick to the less specific group name for the sake of history, tradition and even the poetry in the old names. How unfortunate it would be for the bard if 'Brainfever Bird' were to go into oblivion!

- * To change group names that suggest affinity with unrelated species and accept new group names where there has been no uniformity in their use for a group of birds. For example, species of the genus *Prinia* have been called wren-warblers, hill warblers, grass-warblers, while in fact these are the group names of other genera or families of birds. Hence, we accept the new group name *Prinia* for all the species of this genus.

- * To shorten or delete unnecessary qualifiers. Example, the qualifier Grey is illogical for *Hypocolius ampelinus* as there is only a single species of *Hypocolius* worldwide. Another example is Siberian Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*, now shortened to Red-breasted Goose.

At the same time, we decided that names should not be shortened at the cost of losing out on useful pointers that help identify species, especially those that differentiate (or classify) similar, confusing species. Examples are the adoption of longer names like Lesser Grey-headed Fish-Eagle *Ichthyophaga humilis* and Greater Grey-headed Fish-Eagle *I. ichthyaeetus*, instead of Lesser Fish-Eagle and Grey-headed Fish-Eagle. For the same reason, we have retained the additional qualifiers of Pied, Green and Pygmy in woodpeckers, Blue in robins and Green in pigeons.

- * To accept (if it is felt necessary) new descriptive names that significantly help in the identification of similar-looking, confusing species, e.g., in the case of warblers, flycatchers and tree-creepers.

The other guidelines by which we decided on the common names are as follows:

- * Delete the less popular or inappropriate name for species known by two or more names, e.g., Blue Jay vs. Indian Roller (*Coracias benghalensis*), Rain Quail vs. Black-breasted Quail (*C. coromandelica*) and Ferruginous Pochard vs. White-eyed Pochard (*Aythya nyroca*). In the case of patronyms (species named to honour persons (e.g., Tickell's Flowerpecker *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos*), we have preferred these names over the new suggested descriptive names, as it would be unethical to do away with such names.
- * Use hyphens to join compound group names (e.g., Eared-Pheasant, Green-Pigeon, Night-Heron, Eagle-Owl and Flycatcher Warbler) to help birdwatchers know that these are group names and not descriptive names (e.g., Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*, Indian Broad-billed Roller *Burystomus orientalis*). However, we have not tinkered with some of the well-entrenched fusions such as shelduck, treepie and rosefinch.

We would like to emphasize that the proposal of English names is the central theme of this document, rather than the acceptance of taxonomic changes, as these are in a state of flux. This is a working list, liable to periodical updates, hopefully few.

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STANDARDISED COMMON AND SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF THE BIRDS
OF THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

Divers

- Red-throated Diver (2)
Black-throated Diver (1)

Grebes

- Little Grebe (5)
Red-necked Grebe (4a)
Great Crested Grebe (3)
Horned Grebe (N)
Black-necked Grebe (4)

Petrels & Shearwaters

- Cape Petrel (6)
Mascarene Petrel (13) (deleted)
Trinidad Petrel (EL)
Barau's Petrel (N)
White-headed Petrel (EL)
Soft-plumaged Petrel (EL)
Bulwer's Petrel (13b)
Jouanin's Petrel (13a)
Streaked Shearwater (7)
Wedge-tailed Shearwater (9)
Flesh-footed Shearwater (8)
Sooty Shearwater (N)
Short-tailed Shearwater (10)
• Audubon's Shearwater (11)
• Persian Shearwater (12)

Storm-Petrels

- Wilson's Storm-Petrel (14)
White-faced Storm Petrel (N)
Black-bellied Storm-Petrel (15)
White-bellied Storm-Petrel (N)
• Swinhoe's Storm-Petrel (16)
Matsudaira's Storm-Petrel (EL)

Tropicbirds

- Grey-backed Tropicbird (17)
Red-tailed Tropicbird (18)
Yellow-billed Tropicbird (19)

Pelicans

- Great White Pelican (20)
• Spot-billed Pelican (21) VD
• Dalmatian Pelican (22) CD

Boobies

- Masked Booby (23)
Red-footed Booby (24)
Brown Booby (25)

Cormorants/Shags

- Pygmy Cormorant (28a)
Little Cormorant (28)
Indian Shag (27)
Great Cormorant (26)

Darters

- Darter (29) NT

Gaviidae

- Gavia stellata* (Pontoppidan, 1763)
Gavia arctica (Linnaeus, 1758)

Podicipedidae

- Tachybaptus ruficollis* (Pallas, 1764)
Podiceps griseigena (Boddaert, 1783)
Podiceps cristatus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Podiceps auritus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Podiceps nigricollis Brehm, 1831

Procellariidae

- Diapton capense* (Linnaeus, 1758)
#*Pterodroma aterrima* (Bonaparte, 1856)
Pterodroma arminjoniana (Giglioli & Salvadori, 1869)
#*Pterodroma barau* (Jouanin, 1964)
Pterodroma lessonae (Garnot, 1826)
Pterodroma mollis (Gould, 1844)
Bulweria bulwerii (Jardine & Selby, 1828)
Bulweria fallax Jouanin, 1955
Calonectris leucomelas Temminck, 1835
Puffinus pacificus (Gmelin, 1789)
Puffinus carneipes Gould, 1944
Puffinus griseus (Gmelin, 1789)
Puffinus tenuirostris (Temminck, 1835)
Puffinus lherminieri Lessor, 1839
Puffinus persicus Hume, 1872

Hydrobatidae

- Oceanites oceanicus* (Kuhl, 1820)
Pelagodroma marina (Latham, 1790)
Fregata tropica (Gould, 1844)
Fregata grallaria (Vieillot, 1818)
#*Oceanodroma monorhis* (Swinhoe, 1867)
#*Oceanodroma matsudairae* Kuroda, 1922

Phaethontidae

- Phaethon aethereus* Linnaeus, 1758
Phaethon rubricauda Boddaert, 1783
Phaethon lepturus Daudin, 1802

Pelecanidae

- Pelecanus onocrotalus* Linnaeus, 1758
#*Pelecanus philippensis* Gmelin, 1789
#*Pelecanus crispus* Bruch, 1832

Sulidae

- Sula dactylatra* Lesson, 1831
Sula sula (Linnaeus, 1766)
Sula leucogaster (Boddaert, 1783)

Phalacrocoracidae

- #*Phalacrocorax pygmaeus* (Pallas, 1773)
Phalacrocorax niger (Vieillot, 1817)
Phalacrocorax fuscicollis Stephens, 1826
Phalacrocorax carbo (Linnaeus, 1758)

Anhingidae

- #*Anhinga melanogaster* Pennant, 1769

Frigatebirds

Great Frigatebird (31)
 Lesser Frigatebird (32)
 Christmas Island Frigatebird (30)

Heron, Egrets & Bitterns

Little Egret (49)
 Western Reef-Egret (50)
 Pacific Reef-Egret (51)
 Grey Heron (35-36)
 Goliath Heron (34)
 White-bellied Heron (33) EN
 Great-billed Heron (31)
 Purple Heron (37-37a)
 Large Egret (45-46)
 Median Egret (47, 48)
 Cattle Egret (44)
 Indian Pond-Heron (42-42a)
 Chinese Pond-Heron (40)
 Little Green Heron (38-41)
 Black-crowned Night-Heron (52)
 Malayon Night Heron (53-54)
 Little Bittern (55)
 Yellow Bittern (57)
 Chestnut Bittern (56)
 Black Bittern (58)
 Great Bittern (59)

Storks

Painted Stork (60) NT
 Asian Openbill-Stork (61)
 Black Stork (65)
 White-necked Stork (62)
 * European White Stork (63)
 * Oriental White Stork (64)
 Black-necked Stork (66) NT
 Lesser Adjutant-Stork (68) VU
 Greater Adjutant-Stork (67) EN

Ibises & Spoonbills

Glossy Ibis (71)
 Oriental White Ibis (69) NT
 Black Ibis (70)
 Eurasian Spoonbill (72)

Flamingos

Greater Flamingo (73)
 Lesser Flamingo (74) NT

Swans, Geese & Ducks

Large Whistling Duck (89)
 Lesser Whistling-Duck (88)
 White-headed Duck (123) EN
 Mute Swan (87)
 * Whooper Swan (86)
 * Tundra Swan (84-85)
 Bean Goose (75-77)
 Greater White-fronted Goose (79)
 Lesser White-fronted Goose (80)
 Greylag Goose (81)
 Bar-headed Goose (82)
 Snow Goose (88)

Fregatidae

Fregata minor (Gmelin, 1789)
Fregata ariel (G.R. Gray, 1845)
 **Fregata andrewsi* Mathews, 1914

Ardeidae

Egretta garzetta (Linnaeus, 1766)
Egretta gularis (Bosc, 1792)
Egretta sacra (Gmelin, 1789)
Ardea cinerea Linnaeus, 1758
Ardea goliath Cretzschmar, 1827
 **Ardea insignis* Hume, 1878
Ardea sumatrana Raffles, 1822
Ardea purpurea Linnaeus, 1766
Casmerodius albus (Linnaeus, 1756)
Mesophoyx intermedia (Wagler, 1829)
Bubaleus ibis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Ardeola grayii (Sykes, 1832)
Ardeola bacchus (Bonaparte, 1855)
Butorides striatus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Nycticorax nycticorax (Linnaeus, 1758)
Gorsachius melanolephus (Raffles, 1822)
Ixobrychus minutus (Linnaeus, 1766)
Ixobrychus sinensis (Gmelin, 1789)
Ixobrychus cinnamomeus (Gmelin, 1789)
Eupetor flavicollis (Latham, 1790)
Bataururus stellaris (Linnaeus, 1758)

Ciconiidae

**Mycteria leucocephala* (Pennant, 1769)
 **Anastomus oscitans* (Boddaert, 1783)
Ciconia nigra (Linnaeus, 1758)
Ciconia episcopus (Boddaert, 1783)
Ciconia ciconia (Linnaeus, 1758)
 **Ciconia boyciana* Swinhoe, 1873
Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus (Latham, 1790)
 **Leptoptilos javanicus* (Horsfield, 1821)
 **Leptoptilos dubius* (Gmelin, 1789)

Threskiornithidae

Plegadis falcinellus (Linnaeus, 1766)
 **Threskiornis melanolephus* (Latham, 1790)
 **Pseudibis papillosa* (Temminck, 1824)
Platalea leucorodia Linnaeus, 1758

Phoenicopteridae

Phoenixopterus ruber Linnaeus, 1758
 **Phoenixopterus minor* (Geffroy, 1798)

Anatidae

Dendrocygna bicolor (Vieillot, 1816)
Dendrocygna javanica (Horsfield, 1821)
 **Oxyura leucocephala* (Scopoli, 1769)
Cygnus olor (Gmelin, 1789)
Cygnus cygnus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Cygnus columbianus (Ord, 1815)
Anser fabalis (Latham, 1787)
Anser albifrons (Scopoli, 1769)
 **Anser erythropus* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Anser anser (Linnaeus, 1758)
Anser indicus (Latham, 1790)
Anser caerulescens (Linnaeus, 1758)

Red-breasted Goose (75)
 Brahminy Shelduck (90)
 Common Shelduck (91)
 White-winged Duck (116) EN
 Comb Duck (115)
 Cullor Teal (114)
 Mandarin Duck (113)
 Gadwall (101)
 Falcated Duck (102)
 Eurasian Wigeon (103)
 Mallard (100)
 Spot-billed Duck (97-99)
 Northern Shoveller (105)
 Andaman Teal (96)
 Northern Pintail (93)
 Garganey (104)
 Baikal Teal (95) VU
 Common Teal (94)
 Marbled Teal (92) VU
 Pink-headed Duck (106) CR
 Red-crested Pochard (107)
 Common Pochard (108)
 Ferruginous Pochard (109) NT
 Baer's Pochard (110) VU
 Tufted Pochard (111)
 Greater Scaup (112)
 Long-tailed Duck (117)
 White-winged Scorer (N)
 Common Goldeneye (118)
 Smew (119)
 Red-breasted Merganser (122)
 Common Merganser (120-121)

#*Branta ruficollis* (Pallas, 1769)
Tadorna ferruginea (Pallas, 1764)
Tadorna tadorna (Linnaeus, 1758)
 #*Cairina scutulata* (S. Muller, 1842)
Sarkidiornis melanotos (Pennant, 1739)
Nettion coromandelianus (Gmelin, 1789)
 #*Aix galericulata* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Anas strepera Linnaeus, 1758
Anas falcata Georgi, 1775
Anas penelope Linnaeus, 1758
Anas platyrhynchos Linnaeus, 1758
Anas pectorator J.R. Forster, 1781
Anas cyoptera Linnaeus, 1758
Anas gibberifrons (Muller, 1842)
Anas acuta Linnaeus, 1758
Anas querquedula Linnaeus, 1758
Anas formosa Georgi, 1775
Anas crecca Linnaeus, 1758
 #*Marmaronetta angustirostris* (Menetries, 1802)
 #*Rhodonessa caryophyllacea* (Latham, 1790)
Rhodonessa rufina (Pallas, 1773)
Aythya ferina (Linnaeus, 1758)
 #*Aythya nyroca* (Guldenstadt, 1770)
 #*Aythya baeri* (Radde, 1863)
Aythya fuligula (Linnaeus, 1758)
Aythya marila (Linnaeus, 1761)
Clangula hyemalis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Melanitta fusca (Linnaeus, 1758)
Rucophala clangula (Linnaeus, 1758)
Mergus albellus Linnaeus, 1758
Mergus serrator Linnaeus, 1758
Mergus merganser Linnaeus, 1758

Hawks, Eagles, Buzzards, Old World Vultures, Kites, Harriers

Jerdon's Baza (125-126)
 Black Baza (127-128a)
 Oriental Honey-Buzzard (129-130)
 Black-shouldered Kite (124)
 Red Kite (131)
 Black Kite (132-134)
 Brahminy Kite (135)
 White-bellied Sea-Eagle (173)
 Pallas's Fish-Eagle (174) VU
 White-tailed Sea-Eagle (172a) NT
 Lesser Grey-headed Fish-Eagle (177) NT
 Greater Grey-headed Fish-Eagle (175-176) NT
 Bearded Vulture (188)
 Egyptian Vulture (186-187)
 Indian White-backed Vulture (185) CR
 * Long-billed Vulture (182) CR
 * Slender-billed Vulture (184) CR
 Himalayan Griffon (181)
 Eurasian Griffon (180, 183)
 Circus Vulture (179) NT
 Red-headed Vulture (178) NT
 Short-toed Snake-Eagle (196)
 * Crested Serpent-Eagle (198-200)
 * Nicobar Serpent-Eagle (201-202)
 #Andaman Serpent-Eagle (202a) NT
 Western Marsh-Harrier (193)
 Eastern Marsh-Harrier (194)

Accipitridae

#*Aviceda jerdoni* (Blyth, 1842)
Aviceda leucophotes (Dumont, 1820)
Pernis ptilorhynchus (Temminck, 1821)
Elanus caeruleus (Desfontaines, 1789)
Milvus milvus Linnaeus, 1758
Milvus migrans (Boddaert, 1783)
Haliastur indus (Boddaert, 1783)
Haliaeetus leucogaster (Gmelin, 1788)
 #*Haliaeetus leucorhynchus* (Pallas, 1771)
 #*Haliaeetus albicollis* Linnaeus, 1758
 #*Ichthyophaga humilis* (S. Muller & Schlegel, 1841)
 #*Ichthyophaga ichthyophaga* (Horsfield, 1821)
Gypaetus barbatus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Neophron percnopterus (Linnaeus, 1758)
 #*Gyps bengalensis* (Gmelin, 1788)
 #*Gyps indicus* (Scopoli, 1786)
Gyps tenuirostris (G.R. Gray, 1844)
Gyps himalayensis Hume, 1869
Gyps fulvus (Hablitzl, 1783)
 #*Aegypius monachus* (Linnaeus, 1766)
 #*Sarcogyps calvus* (Scopoli, 1786)
Circus gallicus (Gmelin, 1788)
Spilornis cheela (Latham, 1790)
 #*Spilornis minimus* Hume, 1873
 #*Spilornis elgini* (Blyth, 1863)
Circus aeruginosus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Circus spilonotus Kaup, 1847

Hen Harrier (189)
 Pallid Harrier (190)
 Pied Harrier (192)
 Montagu's Harrier (191)
 Crested Goshawk (144-146)
 * Shikra (137-140)
 * #Nicobar Sparrowhawk (141-142) VU
 Chinese Sparrowhawk (143)
 * Japanese Sparrowhawk (152)
 * Besra Sparrowhawk (149-151)
 Eurasian Sparrowhawk (147-148)
 Northern Goshawk (156)
 White-eyed Buzzard (157)
 Grey-faced Buzzard (EL)
 Common Buzzard (155-156)
 Long-legged Buzzard (163)
 Upland Buzzard (154)
 Rough-legged Buzzard (EL)
 Black Eagle (172)
 Lesser Spotted Eagle (171)
 Greater Spotted Eagle (170) VU
 * Tawny Eagle (168)
 * Steppe Eagle (169)
 Eastern Imperial Eagle (167) VU
 Golden Eagle (166)
 Bonelli's Eagle (163)
 Booted Eagle (164)
 Rufous-bellied Eagle (165)
 Chungchub Hawk Eagle (160-162)
 Mountain Hawk-Eagle (158-159)

Osprey

Osprey (203)

Falcons

Collared Falconet (204)
 Pied Falconet (205)
 Lesser Kestrel (221) VU
 Common Kestrel (222-224)
 Red-headed Falcon (219)
 * Amur Falcon (220)
 Scaly Falcon (216)
 Merlin (217-218)
 Eurasian Hobby (212-213)
 Oriental Hobby (214-215)
 * Lagger (208)
 * Saker (206-207)
 Peregrine Falcon (209-211)

Megapodes/Scrubfowl

* #Nicobar Megapode (225-226) VU

Pheasants, Partridges, Quails

Snow Partridge (227)
 See-see Partridge (229)
 Tibetan Snowcock (229-231)
 Himalayan Snowcock (232)
 Buff-throated Partridge (233)
 Chukor (234-236)
 Black Francolin (237-239)
 Painted Francolin (240-242)
 Chinese Francolin (243)

Circus cyaneus (Linnaeus, 1766)
 #*Circus macrourus* (S.G. Gmelin, 1770)
Circus melanoleucos (Pennant, 1769)
Circus pygargus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Accipiter trivirgatus (Temminck, 1824)
Accipiter badius (Gmelin, 1788)
 #*Accipiter butleri* (Gurney, 1898)
Accipiter soloensis (Horsfield, 1821)
Accipiter gularis (Temminck & Schlegel, 1845)
Accipiter virgatus (Temminck, 1822)
Accipiter nisus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Accipiter gentilis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Butastur teesa (Franklin, 1832)
Butastur indicus (Gmelin, 1788)
Buteo buteo Linnaeus, 1758
Buteo rufinus (Cretzschmar, 1827)
Buteo hemilosius Temminck & Schlegel, 1845
Buteo lagopus (Pontoppidan, 1763)
Ichneutes malayensis (Temminck, 1822)
Aquila pomarina Erhm, 1831
 #*Aquila cianga* Pallas, 1811
Aquila rapax (Temminck, 1828)
Aquila nipalensis Hodgson, 1833
 #*Aquila heliaca* Savigny, 1809
Aquila chrysaetos (Linnaeus, 1758)
Hieraetus fasciatus (Vieillot, 1822)
Hieraetus pennatus (Gmelin, 1788)
Hieraetus keneri (E. Geoffroy, 1835)
Spizaetus cirrhatus (Gmelin, 1788)
Spizaetus nipalensis (Hodgson, 1836)

Pandionidae

Pandion haliaetus (Linnaeus, 1758)

Falconidae

Microhierax caerulescens (Linnaeus, 1758)
 #*Microhierax melanoleucos* (Blyth, 1843)
 #*Falco naumanni* Fleischer, 1818
Falco tinnunculus Linnaeus, 1758
 #*Falco chucquera* Daudin, 1800
Falco amurensis Radde, 1863
Falco concolor Temminck, 1825
Falco columbarius Linnaeus, 1758
Falco subbuto Linnaeus, 1758
Falco severus Horsfield, 1821
Falco jugger J.E. Gray, 1834
Falco cherrug J.E. Gray, 1834
Falco peregrinus Tunstall, 1771

Megapodiidae

#*Megapodius nicobariensis* Blyth, 1846

Phasianidae

Lerwa lerwa (Hodgson, 1833)
Ammodendron griseogularis (J.F. Brandt, 1843)
Tetraogallus tibetanus Gould, 1854
Tetraogallus himalayensis G.R. Gray, 1843
 #*Tetraophasis szechenyi* Madarász, 1885
Alectoris chukar (J.E. Gray, 1830)
Francolinus francolinus (Linnaeus, 1766)
Francolinus pictus (Jardine & Selby, 1828)
Francolinus pintadeanus (Scopoli, 1766)

Grey Francolin (244-246)
 Swamp Francolin (247) VU
 Tibetan Partridge (248-249)
 * Common Quail (250)
 * Japanese Quail (251)
 Rain Quail (252)
 Blue-breasted Quail (253-254)
 Jungle Bush-Quail (255-258)
 Rock Bush-Quail (259-261)
 Painted Bush-Quail (262-263)
 Manipur Bush-Quail (264-265) VU
 Common Hill-Partridge (266-269)
 Rufous-throated Hill-Partridge (270-271)
 White-checked Hill-Partridge (272) NT
 Red-breasted Hill-Partridge (273) VU
 Mountain Bamboo-Partridge (274)
 Red Spurfowl (275-277)
 Painted Spurfowl (278)
 Ceylon Spurfowl (279)
 #Himalayan Quail (280) CR
 Blood Pheasant (281-284)
 Western Tragopan (285) VU
 Satyr Tragopan (286) NT
 Blyth's Tragopan (287-288) VU
 Temminck's Tragopan (289)
 Koklas Pheasant (308-306)
 Impeyan Monal (290)
 Slater's Monal (291) VU
 Red Junglefowl (299-300)
 Grey Junglefowl (301)
 Ceylon Junglefowl (302)
 Kaleej Pheasant (293-298)
 * Tibetan Eared-Pheasant (292) NT
 Cheer Pheasant (307)
 Mrs. Hume's Pheasant (308) VU
 Grey Peacock-Pheasant (309-310)
 Indian Peafowl (311)
 Green Peafowl (312) VU
 Ring-necked Pheasant (Int)

Buttonquails/Bustardquails

Small Buttonquail (313)
 Yellow-legged Buttonquail (314-315)
 Common Buttonquail (316-319)

Cranes

Siberian Crane (325) CR
 Sarus Crane (323-324) VU
 Demoiselle Crane (326)
 Common Crane (320)
 Hooded Crane (322) VU
 Black-necked Crane (321) VU

Rails, Crakes, Moorhens, Coots

#Andaman Crake (333) DD
 Red-legged Crake (331)
 Slaty-legged Crake (332)
 Blue-breasted Rail (329-330)
 Water Rail (327-328)
 Corn Crake (334)
 Brown Crake (342)
 White-breasted Waterhen (343-345)

Francolinus pondicerianus (Gmelin, 1789)
 #*Francolinus gularis* (Temminck, 1815)
Perdix hodgei (Hodgson, 1857)
Coturnix coturnix (Linnaeus, 1758)
Coturnix japonica Temminck & Schlegel, 1849
Coturnix coromandelica (Gmelin, 1789)
Coturnix chinensis (Linnaeus, 1766)
Perdicula asiatica (Latham, 1790)
Perdicula argoondah (Sykes, 1832)
Perdicula erythrorhyncha (Sykes, 1832)
 #*Perdicula manipurensis* Hume, 1881
Arborophila torqueola (Valenciennes, 1826)
Arborophila rufogularis (Blyth, 1849)
 #*Arborophila atrogularis* (Blyth, 1849)
 #*Arborophila mandellii* Hume, 1874
Bambusicola fytchii Anderson, 1871
Galloperdix spadicea (Gmelin, 1789)
Galloperdix lunulata (Valenciennes, 1825)
Galloperdix bicalcarata (J.R. Forster, 1781)
 #*Ophrysia superciliosa* (J.E. Gray, 1846)
Ithaginis eruentus (Hardwicke, 1821)
 #*Tragopan melanocephalus* (J.E. Gray, 1829)
 #*Tragopan satyra* (Linnaeus, 1758)
 #*Tragopan blythii* (Jerdon, 1870)
 #*Tragopan temminckii* (J.E. Gray, 1831)
Pucrasia macrolopha (Lesson, 1829)
Lophophorus impejanus (Latham, 1790)
 #*Lophophorus slateri* Jerdon, 1870
Gallus gallus (Linnaeus, 1758)
 #*Gallus sonneratii* Temminck, 1813
Gallus lafayetii Lesson, 1831
Lophura leucomelanos (Latham, 1790)
 #*Crossoptilon harmani* Elwes, 1881
 #*Catreus wallichii* (Hardwicke, 1827)
 #*Symaticus humiae* (Hume, 1881)
Polyplectron bicalcaratum (Linnaeus, 1758)
Pavo cristatus Linnaeus, 1758
 #*Pavo muticus* Linnaeus, 1768
Phasianus colchicus Linnaeus, 1758

Turnicidae

Turnix sylvatica (Desfontaines, 1789)
Turnix tanki Blyth, 1843
Turnix suscitator (Gmelin, 1789)

Gruidae

#*Grus leucogeranus* Pallas, 1773
 #*Grus antigone* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Grus virgo (Linnaeus, 1758)
Grus grus (Linnaeus, 1758)
 #*Grus monacha* Temminck, 1835
 #*Grus nigricollis* Przevalski, 1876

Rallidae

#*Rallina canningi* (Blyth, 1863)
Rallina fasciata (Raffles, 1822)
Rallina eurizonoides (Lafresnaye, 1845)
Gallirallus striatus Linnaeus, 1766
Rallus aquaticus Linnaeus, 1758
 #*Crex crex* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Amurornis akool (Sykes, 1832)
Amurornis phoenicurus (Pennant, 1769)

Elwas's Crake (341)
 Little Crake (335, 336)
 Baillon's Crake (337)
 Spotted Crake (338)
 Ruddy-breasted Crake (339-340)
 Watercock (346)
 Purple Moorhen (343-349)
 Common Moorhen (347-347a)
 Common Coot (360)

Finfoots

Masked Finfoot (351) VU

Bustards

Little Bustard (353) NT
 Great Bustard (352)
 Great Indian Bustard (354) EN
 Houbara (355) NT
 Bengal Florican (356) EN
 Lesser Florican (357) EN

Jacanas

Pheasant-tailed Jacana (358)
 Bronze-winged Jacana (359)

Painted-Snipes

Greater Painted-Snipe (429)

Oystercatcher

Eurasian Oystercatcher (360-361)

Plovers, Dotterels, Lapwings

European Golden Plover (372)
 * Pacific Golden-Plover (373)
 Grey Plover (371)
 Common Ringed Plover (378)
 Long-billed Ringed Plover (383)
 Little Ringed Plover (379-380)
 Kentish Plover (381-382)
 Lesser Sand Plover (384-384a)
 Greater Sand Plover (374)
 * Caspian Plover (376)
 * Oriental Plover (377)
 Black-fronted Dotterel (375)
 Northern Lapwing (364)
 Yellow-wattled Lapwing (370)
 * River Lapwing (369)
 Grey-headed Lapwing (365)
 Red-wattled Lapwing (366-368)
 Scaup Lapwing (363) VU
 White-tailed Lapwing (362)

Sandpipers, Stints, Snipes, Godwits & Curlews

Eurasian Woodcock (411)
 Solitary Snipe (404)
 Wood Snipe (405) VU
 Pintail Snipe (406)
 Swinhoe's Snipe (407)
 Great Snipe (408) NT
 Common Snipe (409)
 Jack Snipe (410)
 Black-tailed Godwit (389-390)

Porzana bicolor (Walden, 1872)
Porzana parva (Scopoli, 1769)
Porzana pusilla (Pallas, 1776)
Porzana porzana (Linnaeus, 1766)
Porzana fusca (Linnaeus, 1766)
Gallinula cinerea (Gmelin, 1789)
Porphyrio porphyrio (Linnaeus, 1758)
Gallinula chloropus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Fulica atra Linnaeus, 1758

Helionithidae

#*Heliopsis personata* (G.R. Gray, 1849)

Otididae

#*Tetrax tetrax* (Linnaeus, 1758)
 #*Otis tarda* Linnaeus, 1758
 #*Ardeotis nigriceps* (Vigors, 1831)
Chlamydotis undulata (Jacquin, 1784)
 #*Houbaropsis bengalensis* (Gmelin, 1789)
 #*Sypheotides indica* (J.F. Miller, 1782)

Jacaniidae

Hydrophasianus chirurgus (Scopoli, 1786)
Melopidius indicus (Latham, 1790)

Rostratulidae

Rostratula benghalensis (Linnaeus, 1758)

Haematopodidae

Haematopus ostralegus Linnaeus, 1758

Charadriidae

Pluvialis apricaria (Linnaeus, 1758)
Pluvialis fulva (Gmelin, 1789)
Pluvialis squatarola (Linnaeus, 1758)
Charadrius hiaticula Linnaeus, 1758
 #*Charadrius placidus* J.E. Gray, 1863
Charadrius dubius Scopoli, 1786
Charadrius alexandrinus Linnaeus, 1758
Charadrius mongolus Pallas, 1776
Charadrius leschaultii Lesson, 1826
Charadrius asiaticus Pallas, 1773
Charadrius veredus Gould, 1848
Elseyornis melanops (Vieillot, 1818)
Vanellus vanellus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Vanellus malabaricus (Boddaert, 1783)
Vanellus duvaucelii (Lesson, 1836)
 #*Vanellus cinereus* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Vanellus indicus (Boddaert, 1783)
 #*Vanellus gregarius* (Pallas, 1771)
Vanellus leucurus (Lichtenstein, 1823)

Scolopacidae

Scelopax rusticola Linnaeus, 1758
Gallinago solitaria Hodgson, 1831
 #*Gallinago nemoricola* Hodgson, 1836
Gallinago stenura (Bonaparte, 1830)
Gallinago megala Swinhoe, 1861
 #*Gallinago media* (Latham, 1787)
Gallinago gallinago (Linnaeus, 1758)
Limnophanes minimus (Brünnich, 1764)
Limosa limosa (Linnaeus, 1758)

Bar-tailed Godwit (391-391a)

Whimbrel (385-386)

Eurasian Curlew (387-388)

Eastern Curlew (N)

Slender-billed Curlew (E.L.)

Spotted Redshank (392)

Common Redshank (393, 394)

Marsh Sandpiper (395)

Common Greenshank (396)

Spotted Greenshank (399) EN

Green Sandpiper (397)

Wood Sandpiper (398)

Terek Sandpiper (400)

Common Sandpiper (401)

Grey-tailed Tattler (N)

Ruddy Turnstone (402)

Long-billed Dowitcher (N)

Asian Dowitcher (403) NT

Great Knot (413)

Red Knot (412)

Sanderling (414)

Spoonbill Sandpiper (423) VU

Little Stint (416)

Rufous-necked Stint (415)

Temminck's Stint (417)

Long-toed Stint (418)

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (419)

Dunlin (420, 421)

Curlew Sandpiper (422)

Buff-breasted Sandpiper (425a)

Broad-billed Sandpiper (424-425)

Ruff (426)

Ibisbill, Avocets & Stilts

Ibisbill (433)

Black-winged Stilt (430-431)

Pied Avocet (432)

Phalaropes

Red-necked Phalarope (428)

Red Phalarope (427)

Crab-Plovers

Crab-Plover (434)

Stone-Curlew & Stone-Plovers/Thick-knees

Stone-Curlew (435-436)

* Great Stone-Plover (437)

* Beach Stone-Plover (438) NT

Couriers & Pratincoles

#Jerdon's Courier (441) CR

Cream-coloured Courier (439)

Indian Courier (440)

* Collared Pratincole (442)

* Oriental Pratincole (443)

Small Pratincole (444)

Skuas & Jaegers

* Brown Skua (445-446)

* South Polar Skua (446a)

Pomarine Jaeger (447)

Limosa lapponica (Linnaeus, 1758)

Numenius phaeopus (Linnaeus, 1758)

Numenius arquata (Linnaeus, 1758)

Numenius madagascariensis (Linnaeus, 1766)

#*Numenius tenuirostris* Vieillot, 1817

Tringa erythropus (Pallas, 1764)

Tringa totanus (Linnaeus, 1758)

Tringa stagnatilis (Bechstein, 1803)

Tringa nebularia (Gunner, 1767)

#*Tringa guttifer* (Nordmann, 1835)

Tringa ochropus Linnaeus, 1758

Tringa glareola Linnaeus, 1758

Xenus cinereus (Gildenstadt, 1774)

Actitis hypoleucos Linnaeus, 1758

Heteroscelus brevipes (Vieillot, 1816)

Arenaria interpres (Linnaeus, 1758)

Limnodromus scolopaceus (Say, 1823)

#*Limnodromus semipalmatus* (Blyth, 1848)

Calidris tenuirostris (Horsfield, 1821)

Calidris canutus (Linnaeus, 1758)

Calidris alba (Pallas, 1764)

#*Calidris pygmaea* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Calidris minuta (Leisler, 1812)

Calidris ruficollis (Pallas, 1776)

Calidris temminckii (Leisler, 1812)

Calidris subminuta (Middendorff, 1853)

Calidris acuminata (Horsfield, 1821)

Calidris alpina (Linnaeus, 1758)

Calidris ferruginea (Pontoppidan, 1813)

Tryngites subruficollis (Vieillot, 1819)

Limicola falcinellus (Pontoppidan, 1763)

Philomachus pugnax (Linnaeus, 1758)

Recurvirostridae

Ibidorhyncha struthersii Vigors, 1832

Himantopus himantopus (Linnaeus, 1758)

Recurvirostra avosetta Linnaeus, 1758

Phalaropodidae

Phalaropus lobatus (Linnaeus, 1758)

Phalaropus fulicarius (Linnaeus, 1758)

Dromadidae

Dromas ardeola Paykull, 1805

Burhinidae

Burhinus oedipnemus (Linnaeus, 1758)

Esacus recurvirostris (Cuvier, 1829)

Esacus magnirostris (Vieillot, 1818)

Glareolidae

#*Rhinoptilus bitorquatus* (Blyth, 1848)

Cursorius cursor (Latham, 1787)

Cursorius coromandelicus (Gmelin, 1789)

Glareola pratincola (Linnaeus, 1766)

Glareola maldivarum J.R. Forster, 1795

Glareola lactea Temminck, 1820

Stercorariidae

Catharacta antarctica (Lesson, 1831)

Catharacta maccormicki (Saunders, 1893)

Stercorarius pomarinus (Temminck, 1815)

Parasitic Jaeger (448)
Long-tailed Jaeger (EL)

Gulls, Terns & Noddies

White-eyed Gull (N)
Sooty Gull (449)
Mew Gull (N)
Great Black-backed Gull (452a) (deleted)
* Heuglin's Gull (450)
* Yellow-legged Gull (451)
Vega Gull (EL)
Armenian Gull (EL)
Lesser Black-backed Gull (452) (deleted)
Pallas's Gull (453)
Brown-headed Gull (454)
Black-headed Gull (455)
Slender-billed Gull (456)
Little Gull (457)
Gull-billed Tern (460-461)
Caspian Tern (462)
River Tern (463)
Lesser Crested Tern (479)
Large Crested Tern (478)
Sandwich Tern (480)
Roseate Tern (466)
Black-naped Tern (468-469)
Common Tern (464-465)
Arctic Tern (466a)
Little Tern (475-476)
Saunders's Tern (477)
White-cheeked Tern (467)
Black-bellied Tern (470) NT
Bridled Tern (471, 472, 473)
Sooty Tern (474)
Whiskered Tern (458)
White-winged Black Tern (459)
Black Tern (459a)
Brown Noddy (481)
* Black Noddy (482)
Lesser Noddy (N)
White Tern (483)

Skimmers

Indian Skimmer (484) VU

Sandgrouse

Tibetan Sandgrouse (485)
Pallas's Sandgrouse (485a)
White-bellied Sandgrouse (486)
Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse (487)
Spotted Sandgrouse (488)
Black-bellied Sandgrouse (489)
Crowned Sandgrouse (490)
* Painted Sandgrouse (492)
* Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse (491)

Pigeons & Doves

Blue Rock Pigeon (516-517)
Hill Pigeon (515)
Snow Pigeon (513-514)
Eastern Stock Pigeon (518) VU
Western Stock Pigeon (EL)

Stercorarius parasiticus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Stercorarius longicaudus Vieillot, 1819

Laridae

Larus leucophthalmus Temminck, 1825
Larus hemprichii Bruch, 1853
Larus canus Linnaeus, 1758
Larus marinus Linnaeus, 1758
Larus heuglini Broc, 1876
Larus cachinnans Pallas, 1811
Larus vegae Palmén, 1887
Larus armenicus Buturlin, 1934
Larus fuscus Linnaeus, 1758
Larus ichthyaetus Pallas, 1773
Larus brunnicapillus Jerdon, 1840
Larus ridibundus Linnaeus, 1766
Larus genei Brème, 1839
Larus minutus Pallas, 1776
Gelochelidon nilotica (Gmelin, 1789)
Sterna caspia Pallas, 1770
Sterna aurantia J.E. Gray, 1831
Sterna bengalensis Lesson, 1831
Sterna bergii Lichtenstein, 1823
Sterna sandwicensis Latham, 1787
Sterna dougallii Montagu, 1813
Sterna sumatrana Raffles, 1822
Sterna hirundo Linnaeus, 1758
Sterna paradisaea Pontoppidan, 1763
Sterna albifrons Pallas, 1764
Sterna saundersi Hume, 1877
Sterna repressa Hartert, 1916
#*Sterna acuticauda* J.E. Gray, 1931
Sterna anaethetus Scopoli, 1796
Sterna fuscata Linnaeus, 1766
Chlidonias hybridus (Pallas, 1811)
Chlidonias leucopterus (Temminck, 1815)
Chlidonias niger (Linnaeus, 1758)
Anous stolidus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Anous minutus Boie, 1844
Anous tenuirostris (Temminck, 1823)
Gygis alba (Sparman, 1786)

Rynchopidae

#*Rynchops albicollis* Swainson, 1838

Pteroclididae

Syrhaptes tibetanus Gould, 1850
Syrhaptes paradoxus (Pallas, 1773)
Pterocles alchata (Linnaeus, 1766)
Pterocles exustus Temminck, 1825
Pterocles senegallus (Linnaeus, 1771)
Pterocles orientalis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Pterocles coronatus Lichtenstein, 1823
Pterocles indicus (Gmelin, 1789)
Pterocles lichtensteinii Temminck, 1825

Columbidae

Columba livia Gmelin, 1789
Columba rupestris Pallas, 1811
Columba leuconota Vigors, 1831
Columba eversmanni Bonaparte, 1856
Columba oenas Linnaeus, 1758

Common Wood-Pigeon (519)
 Speckled Wood-Pigeon (520)
 Ashy Wood-Pigeon (523)
 #Nilgiri Wood-Pigeon (521) VU
 Ceylon Wood-Pigeon (522)
 Purple Wood-Pigeon (524) VU
 Andaman Wood-Pigeon (525) NT
 European Turtle-Dove (523)
 Oriental Turtle-Dove (530-533)
 Little Brown Dove (541)
 Spotted Dove (537-540)
 Red Collared Dove (535-536)
 Eurasian Collared Dove (534)
 Barred Cuckoo-Dove (526)
 #Andaman Cuckoo-Dove (527-527a) NT
 Emerald Dove (542-544a)
 Nicobar Pigeon (544b) NT
 Orange-breasted Green-Pigeon (501-502)
 Pompadour Green-Pigeon (496-500)
 Thick-billed Green-Pigeon (495)
 Yellow-legged Green-Pigeon (503-505)
 Pin-tailed Green-Pigeon (493)
 Wedge-tailed Green-Pigeon (494)
 Green Imperial-Pigeon (506-508a)
 Mountain Imperial-Pigeon (510-512)
 Pied Imperial-Pigeon (509)

Parakeets & Hanging-Parrots

Indian Hanging-Parrot (566-567)
 Ceylon Hanging-Parrot (568)
 Alexandrine Parakeet (545-548)
 Rose-ringed Parakeet (549-550)
 Slaty-headed Parakeet (562)
 Grey-headed Parakeet (563)
 Intermediate Parakeet (561)*
 Plum-headed Parakeet (557-558)
 Blossom-headed Parakeet (559-560)
 Blue-winged Parakeet (564)
 Layard's Parakeet (565)
 Lord Derby's Parakeet (554)
 Red-breasted Parakeet (551-552)
 #Nicobar Parakeet (553) NT
 Red-cheeked Parakeet (555-556) NT

Cuckoos, Malkohas & Coucals

Pied Crested Cuckoo (570-571)
 Red-winged Crested Cuckoo (569)
 Large Hawk-Cuckoo (572)
 Brainfever Bird (573-574)
 Hodgson's Hawk-Cuckoo (575)
 Indian Cuckoo (576)
 Common Cuckoo (577-579)
 Oriental Cuckoo (580-580a)
 Lesser Cuckoo (581)
 Banded Bay Cuckoo (582-583)
 Indian Plaintive Cuckoo (584)
 Rufous-bellied Plaintive Cuckoo (585)
 Asian Emerald Cuckoo (586)
 Violet Cuckoo (587)
 Drongo Cuckoo (588-589)

Columba palumbus Linnaeus, 1758
Columba hodgsonii Vigors, 1832
Columba pulchricollis Blyth, 1846
 #*Columba elphinstonii* (Sykes, 1833)
 #*Columba torringtoni* Bonaparte, 1854
 #*Columba punicea* Blyth, 1842
 #*Columba palumboides* (Hume, 1873)
Streptopelia turtur (Linnaeus, 1758)
Streptopelia orientalis (Latham, 1790)
Streptopelia senegalensis (Linnaeus, 1766)
Streptopelia chinensis (Scopoli, 1786)
Streptopelia tranquebarica (Hermann, 1804)
Streptopelia decaocto (Frisvaldszky, 1838)
Macropygia unchall (Wagler, 1827)
 #*Macropygia rufipennis* Blyth, 1846
Chalcophaps indica (Linnaeus, 1758)
 #*Caloenas nicobarica* (Linnaeus, 1758)
Treron bicincta (Jerdon, 1840)
Treron pompadour (Gmelin, 1789)
Treron curvirostris (Gmelin, 1789)
Treron phoenicoptera (Latham, 1790)
Treron apicauda Blyth, 1846
Treron sphenura (Vigors, 1832)
Ducula aenea (Linnaeus, 1766)
Ducula badia (Raffles, 1822)
Ducula bicolor (Scopoli, 1786)

Psittacidae

Loriculus vernalis (Spartman, 1797)
Loriculus beryllinus (J.R. Forster, 1781)
Psittacula eupatria (Linnaeus, 1766)
Psittacula krameri (Scopoli, 1769)
Psittacula himalayana (Lesson, 1832)
Psittacula finchii (Hume, 1874)
 #*Psittacula intermedia* (Rothschild, 1895)
Psittacula cyanocephala (Linnaeus, 1766)
Psittacula roseata Biswas, 1951
Psittacula columboides (Vigors, 1830)
Psittacula calthropae (Blyth, 1849)
 #*Psittacula derbiana* (Fraser, 1852)
Psittacula alexandri (Linnaeus, 1758)
 #*Psittacula caniceps* (Blyth, 1846)
Psittacula longicauda (Boddaert, 1783)

Cuculidae

Clamator jacobinus (Boddaert, 1783)
Clamator coromandus (Linnaeus, 1766)
Hierococcyx sparveroides (Vigors, 1832)
Hierococcyx varius (Vahl, 1797)
Hierococcyx fugax (Horsfield, 1821)
Cuculus micropterus Gould, 1838
Cuculus canorus Linnaeus, 1758
Cuculus saturatus Blyth, 1843
Cuculus poliocephalus Latham, 1790
Cacomantis sonneratii (Latham, 1790)
Cacomantis passerinus (Vahl, 1797)
Cacomantis merulinus (Scopoli, 1788)
Chrysococcyx maculatus (Gmelin, 1788)
Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus (Horsfield, 1821)
Surniculus lugubris (Horsfield, 1821)

* Recent studies have shown that this bird is a hybrid between Slaty-headed and Plum-headed parakeets (see Kazmierczak 2000).

Asian Koel (590-592)
 Large Green-billed Malkoha (593-594)
 Small Green-billed Malkoha (595)
 Sirkeer Malkoha (596-598)
 Red-faced Malkoha (599)
 * Greater Coucal (600-602)
 * Andaman Coucal (603)
 * Lesser Coucal (605)
 Ceylon Coucal (604)

Barn Owls

Barn Owl (606-607)
 Grass Owl (608)
 Oriental Bay-Owl (609-610)

Owls

#Andaman Scops-Owl (613) NT
 Spotted Scops-Owl (611-612)
 Pallid Scops-Owl (614)
 * Eurasian Scops-Owl (615)
 * Oriental Scops-Owl (616-618b)
 #Nicobar Scops-Owl (N) DD
 Collared Scops-Owl (619-624)
 Eurasian Eagle-Owl (625-627)
 Forest Eagle-Owl (628-629)
 Dusky Eagle-Owl (630)
 Brown Fish-Owl (631-632)
 Tawny Fish-Owl (633)
 Bully Fish-Owl (633a)
 Snowy Owl (634)
 Mottled Wood-Owl (655-657)
 Brown Wood-Owl (658-660)
 Tawny Wood-Owl (661-662)
 Hume's Wood-Owl (654)
 Collared Owlet (635)
 Asian Barred Owlet (639-641)
 * Jungle Owlet (636-637)
 * Chestnut-backed Owlet (638)
 Little Owl (643-649)
 Spotted Owlet (650-652)
 #Forest Owlet (653) CR
 Tengmalm's Owl (665)
 Brown Hawk-Owl (642-645)
 #Andaman Hawk-Owl (646-647) NT
 Long-eared Owl (663)
 Short-eared Owl (664)

Frogmouths

Ceylon Frogmouth (666)
 Hodgson's Frogmouth (667)

Nightjars

Great Eared-Nightjar (668-669)
 Indian Jungle Nightjar (670-672a)
 European Nightjar (673)
 Egyptian Nightjar (673a)
 Sykes's Nightjar (674)
 * Large-tailed Nightjar (675, 678-679)
 * Jerdon's Nightjar (676, 677)
 Common Indian Nightjar (680-681)
 Franklin's Nightjar (692)

Eudynamis scolopacea (Linnaeus, 1758)
Phaenicophaeus trictis (Latham, 1830)
Phaenicophaeus viridirostris (Jerdon, 1840)
Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii (Lesson, 1830)
 #*Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus* (Pennant, 1769)
Centropus sinensis (Stephens, 1815)
 #*Centropus andamanensis* Beavan, 1867
Centropus bengalensis (Gmelin, 1788)
 #*Centropus chlororhynchus* Blyth, 1849

Tytonidae

Tyto alba (Scopoli, 1769)
Tyto capensis (A. Smith 1834)
Phodilus badius (Horsfield, 1821)

Strigidae

#*Otus butli* (Hume, 1873)
Otus suluensis (Blyth, 1846)
Otus brucei (Hume, 1872)
Otus scops (Linnaeus, 1758)
Otus sunia (Hodgson, 1836)
 #*Otus alius* Rasmussen, 1998
Otus bakhamoena Pennant, 1769
Bubo bubo (Linnaeus, 1758)
 #*Bubo nipalensis* Hodgson, 1836
Bubo coromandus (Latham, 1790)
Ketupa seylonensis (Gmelin, 1788)
 #*Ketupa flavipes* (Hodgson, 1835)
Ketupa ketupu (Horsfield, 1821)
Nyctea scandiaca (Linnaeus, 1758)
Strix ocellata (Lesson, 1839)
Strix leptogrammica Temminck, 1831
Strix aluco Linnaeus, 1759
Strix butleri (Hume, 1878)
Glaucidium brodiei (Burton, 1836)
Glaucidium cuculoides (Vigors, 1831)
Glaucidium radiatum (Tickell, 1853)
 #*Glaucidium castanonotum* (Blyth, 1862)
Athene noctua (Scopoli, 1769)
Athene brama (Temminck, 1821)
 #*Heteroglaux blewitti* Hume, 1873
Asio otus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Ninox scutulata (Raffles, 1822)
 #*Ninox affinis* Beavan, 1867
Asio otus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Asio flammeus (Pontoppidan, 1763)

Podargidae

#*Batrachostomus moniliger* Blyth, 1846
Batrachostomus hodgsoni (G.R. Gray, 1859)

Caprimulgidae

Eurostoechus macrotis (Vigors, 1831)
Caprimulgus indicus Latham, 1790
Caprimulgus europaeus Linnaeus, 1758
Caprimulgus aegyptius Lichtenstein, 1823
Caprimulgus makrattensis Sykes, 1832
Caprimulgus macrurus Horsfield, 1821
Caprimulgus atripennis Jerdon, 1845
Caprimulgus asiaticus Latham, 1790
Caprimulgus affinis Horsfield, 1821

Swifts

White-bellied Swiftlet (687)
 Indian Edible-nest Swiftlet (685)
 Himalayan Swiftlet (683-684)
 Black-nest Swiftlet (684a) (EL)
 Common Edible-nest Swiftlet (686)
 White-rumped Needletail-Swift (692)
 White-throated Needletail-Swift (688)
 Silver-backed Needletail-Swift (689-690)
 Brown-backed Needletail-Swift (691)
 * Asian Palm-Swift (707-708)
 Alpine Swift (693-695)
 Common Swift (696)
 Pallid Swift (697)
 Pacific Swift (699-700)
 Khasi Hills Swift (698) VU
 House Swift (702-706)

Tree-Swifts

* Crested Tree-Swift (709)

Trogon

Malabar Trogon (710-712)
 Red-headed Trogon (713-715)
 Ward's Trogon (716) NT

Kingfishers

Blyth's Kingfisher (721) NT
 Small Blue Kingfisher (722-724)
 Blue-eared Kingfisher (725-726a)
 Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher (727-728)
 Stork-billed Kingfisher (730-732)
 Brown-winged Kingfisher (729) NT
 Ruddy Kingfisher (733-734)
 White-breasted Kingfisher (735-738)
 Black-capped Kingfisher (739)
 Collared Kingfisher (740-743)
 Greater Pied Kingfisher (717-718)
 Lesser Pied Kingfisher (719-720)

Bee-eaters

Blue-bearded Bee-eater (753)
 Small Bee-eater (749-752)
 Blue-checked Bee-eater (747)
 Blue-tailed Bee-eater (748)
 European Bee-eater (746)
 Chestnut-headed Bee-eater (744-745)

Rollers

European Roller (754)
 Indian Roller (755-757)
 Oriental Broad-billed Roller (758-762)

Hoopoes

Common Hoopoe (763-766)

Hornbills

* Malabar Grey Hornbill (768)
 * Ceylon Grey Hornbill (769)
 Indian Grey Hornbill (767)
 Malabar Pied Hornbill (775) NT
 * Oriental Pied Hornbill (774)

Apodidae

Collocalia esculenta (Linnaeus, 1758)
Collocalia unicolor (Jerdon, 1840)
Collocalia brevirostris (Horsfield, 1840)
Collocalia maxima Hume, 1878
Collocalia fuciphaga Thunberg, 1812
Zoonavena sylvatica (Tickell, 1846)
Hirundapus caudacutus (Latham, 1802)
Hirundapus cochinchinensis (Oustalet, 1878)
Hirundapus giganteus (Temminck, 1846)
Cypsiurus balusienis (J.E. Gray, 1829)
Tachymarpis melba (Linnaeus, 1758)
Apus apus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Apus pallidus (Shelley, 1873)
Apus pacificus (Latham, 1801)
#Apus acuticauda (Jerdon, 1864)
Apus affinis (J.E. Gray, 1830)

Hemiprocnidae

Hemiprocne coronata (Tickell, 1833)

Trogonidae

Harpactes fasciatus (Pennant, 1769)
Harpactes erythrocephalus (Gould, 1834)
#Harpactes wardi (Kinnear, 1927)

Alcedinidae

#Alcedo hercules Laubmann, 1917
Alcedo atthis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Alcedo meninting Horsfield, 1821
Ceyx erithaca (Linnaeus, 1753)
Halcyon expensis (Linnaeus, 1766)
#Halcyon amauroptera Pearson, 1841
Halcyon coromanda (Latham, 1790)
Halcyon amyrnensis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Halcyon pileata (Boddaert, 1782)
Todiramphus chloris (Boddaert, 1783)
Megasceryle lugubris (Temminck, 1834)
Ceryle rudis (Linnaeus, 1758)

Meropidae

Nyctornis atherton (Jardine & Selby, 1828)
Merops orientalis Latham, 1801
Merops persicus Pallas, 1773
Merops philippinus Linnaeus, 1766
Merops apiaster Linnaeus, 1758
Merops leschenaulti Vieillot, 1817

Coraciidae

Coracias garrulus Linnaeus, 1758
Coracias benghalensis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Eurystomus orientalis (Linnaeus, 1766)

Upupidae

Upupa epops Linnaeus, 1758

Bucerotidae

#Oryx capensis (Latham, 1790)
Oryx capensis (Shaw, 1811)
Oryx capensis (Scopoli, 1786)
#Anthracoceros coronatus (Boddaert, 1783)
Anthracoceros albirostris (Shaw, 1808)

Great Pied Hornbill (776) NT
Brown Hornbill (770) NT
Rufous-necked Hornbill (771) VU
Wreathed Hornbill (772)
#Narcondam Hornbill (773) VU
Plain-pouched Hornbill (EL)

Barbets

Great Barbet (777-779)
Brown-headed Barbet (780-782)
Lineated Barbet (783-784)
White-cheeked Barbet (785)
Yellow-fronted Barbet (786)
Golden-throated Barbet (787)
Blue-throated Barbet (788)
Blue-eared Barbet (789)
Crimson-throated Barbet (790-791)
Coppersmith Barbet (792)

Honeyguides

Yellow-rumped Honeyguide (793-795) NT

Woodpeckers

Eurasian Wryneck (796)
Speckled Piculet (798-799)
Rufous Piculet (800-801)
Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker (851-854)
Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker (848-850)
Brown-fronted Pied Woodpecker (842-843)
Fulvous-breasted Pied Woodpecker (845-846)
Stripe-breasted Pied Woodpecker (844)
Yellow-fronted Pied Woodpecker (847)
Rufous-bellied Pied Woodpecker (832-833)
Crimson-breasted Pied Woodpecker (840-841)
Darjeeling Pied Woodpecker (838, 839)
Great Pied Woodpecker (834)
Sind Pied Woodpecker (835)
Himalayan Pied Woodpecker (836-837)
Three-toed Woodpecker (855) (EL)
Rufous Woodpecker (802-804)
* Great Black Woodpecker (830)
* #Andaman Black Woodpecker (831) NT
Eurasian Black Woodpecker (831a) (EL)
Small Yellow-naped Woodpecker (814-817)
Large Yellow-naped Woodpecker (812-813)
Laced Woodpecker (N)
Little Scaly-bellied Green Woodpecker (808)
Large Scaly-bellied Green Woodpecker (806-807)
Black-naped Green Woodpecker (809-811)
Himalayan Golden-backed Woodpecker (824)
Common Golden-backed Woodpecker (825-826)
Lesser Golden-backed Woodpecker (818-823)
Greater Golden-backed Woodpecker (860-863)
Black-shouldered Woodpecker (858-859)
Pale-headed Woodpecker (827)
Bay Woodpecker (857)
Heart-spotted Woodpecker (856)
Great Slaty Woodpecker (828-829)

Broadbills

Hodgson's Broadbill (864)
Long-tailed Broadbill (865)

Buceros bicornis Linnaeus, 1758
#*Anorrhinus tickelli* (Blyth, 1855)
#*Aceros nipalensis* (Hodgson, 1829)
Aceros undulatus (Shaw, 1811)
#*Aceros narcondami* (Hume, 1873)
#*Aceros subruficollis* (Blyth, 1843)

Capitonidae

Megalaima nirens (Boddaert, 1783)
Megalaima seylanica (Gmelin, 1768)
Megalaima lineata (Vieillot, 1816)
Megalaima viridis (Boddaert, 1783)
Megalaima flavifrons (Cuvier, 1817)
Megalaima franklinii (Blyth, 1842)
Megalaima asiatica (Latham, 1790)
Megalaima australis (Horsfield, 1821)
Megalaima rubricapillus (Gmelin, 1768)
Megalaima haemacephala (P.L.S. Müller, 1776)

Indicatoridae

#*Indicator xanthonotus* Blyth, 1842

Picidae

Jynx torquilla Linnaeus, 1758
Picumnus innominatus Burton, 1836
Sasia ochracea Hodgson, 1836
Dendrocopos natus (Vigors, 1832)
Dendrocopos canicapillus (Blyth, 1845)
Dendrocopos auriceps (Vigors, 1831)
Dendrocopos macul (Vieillot, 1818)
Dendrocopos atratus (Blyth, 1849)
Dendrocopos maharattensis (Latham, 1801)
Dendrocopos hyperythrus (Vigors, 1831)
Dendrocopos culipharus (Blyth, 1843)
Dendrocopos darjellensis (Blyth, 1845)
Dendrocopos major (Linnaeus, 1758)
Dendrocopos assimilis (Blyth, 1849)
Dendrocopos himalayensis (Jardine & Selby, 1831)
Picoides tridactylus Linnaeus, 1758
Celeus brachyurus (Vieillot, 1818)
Dryocopus javensis (Horsfield, 1821)
#*Dryocopus hodgei* (Blyth, 1860)
Dryocopus martius (Linnaeus, 1758)
Picus chlorolophus Vieillot, 1818
Picus flavinucha Gould, 1834
Picus vittatus Vieillot, 1818
Picus xanthopygaeus (J.E. Gray & G.R. Gray, 1846)
Picus squamatus Vigors, 1831
Picus canus Gmelin, 1768
Dinopium shorii (Vigors, 1832)
Dinopium javanense (Ljungh, 1797)
Dinopium benghalense (Linnaeus, 1758)
Chrysocolaptes lucidus (Scopoli, 1786)
Chrysocolaptes festivus (Boddaert, 1783)
Gecinulus grantia (Horsfield, 1840)
Blythipicus pyrrhotis (Hodgson, 1837)
Hemicircus canente (Lesson, 1830)
Mulleripicus pulverulentus (Temminck, 1826)

Eurylaimidae

Serilophus lunotus (Gould, 1834)
Psarisomus dalhousiae (Jameson, 1835)

Pittas

- Eared Pitta (N)
- Blue-naped Pitta (866)
- Blue Pitta (871)
- Hooded Pitta (869-870)
- Indian Pitta (867)
- * Mangrove Pitta (868)

Larks

- * Singing Bush-Lark (872)
- Red-winged Bush-Lark (875-877)
- * Bengal Bush-Lark (873)
- * Jerdon's Bush-Lark (874)
- Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark (879)
- Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark (878)
- Bar-tailed Finch-Lark (881)
- Rufous-tailed Finch-Lark (882-883)
- Desert Finch-Lark (880)
- Greater Hoopoe-Lark (884)
- European Calandra-Lark (EL)
- Eastern Calandra-Lark (892)
- Long-billed Calandra-Lark (893-894)
- * Greater Short-toed Lark (885-886)
- Hume's Short-toed Lark (887-888)
- * Lesser Short-toed Lark (888a)
- * Asian Short-toed Lark (888b)
- Indian Short-toed Lark (889-891)
- Common Crested Lark (898-900)
- Malabar Crested Lark (901)
- Sykes's Crested Lark (902)
- Eurasian Skylark (903-903a)
- Eastern Skylark (904-909)
- Horned Lark (895-897)

Swallows & Martins

- * Sand Martin (911)
- * Pale Martin (910)
- Plain Martin (912)
- Eurasian Crag-Martin (913)
- Pale Crag-Martin (915)
- Dusky Crag-Martin (914)
- Common Swallow (916-918)
- House Swallow (919-920)
- Wire-tailed Swallow (921)
- Red-rumped Swallow (923-928)
- Striated Swallow (929)
- Streak-throated Swallow (922)
- * Northern House-Martin (930)
- * Asian House-Martin (931)
- Nepal House-Martin (932)

Wagtails & Pipits

- Forest Wagtail (1874)
- White Wagtail (1885-1890)
- Large Pied Wagtail (1891)
- Citrine Wagtail (1881-1883)
- Yellow Wagtail (1875-1880)
- Gray Wagtail (1884)
- * Richard's Pipit (1857)
- * Paddyfield Pipit (1858-1860)
- Tawny Pipit (1861-1862)
- Blyth's Pipit (1863)

Pittidae

- Pitta phayrei* (Blyth, 1863)
- **Pitta nipalensis* (Hodgson, 1837)
- Pitta cyanea* Blyth, 1843
- Pitta sordida* (P.L.S. Muller, 1776)
- Pitta brachyura* (Linnaeus, 1766)
- **Pitta megarhyncha* Schlegel, 1863

Alaudidae

- Mirafra cantillans* Blyth, 1845
- Mirafra erythroptera* Blyth, 1845
- Mirafra assamica* Horsfield, 1840
- Mirafra affinis* Blyth, 1845
- Eremopterix nigriceps* (Gould, 1839)
- Eremopterix grisea* (Scopoli, 1736)
- Ammomanes cineturus* (Gould, 1839)
- Ammomanes phoenicurus* (Franklin, 1831)
- Ammomanes deserti* (Lichtenstein, 1823)
- Alaemon alaudipes* (Desfontaines, 1789)
- Melanocorypha calandra* (Linnaeus, 1766)
- Melanocorypha bimaculata* (Ménétrières, 1832)
- Melanocorypha maxima* Blyth, 1867
- Calandrella brachydactyla* (Leisler, 1814)
- Calandrella acutirostris* Hume, 1872
- Calandrella rufescens* (Vieillot, 1820)
- Calandrella cheleensis* (Swinhoe, 1871)
- Calandrella raytal* (Blyth, 1845)
- Galerida cristata* (Linnaeus, 1758)
- Galerida malabarica* (Scopoli, 1786)
- Galerida deva* (Sykes, 1832)
- Alauda arvensis* Linnaeus, 1758
- Alauda gulgula* Franklin, 1831
- Eremophila alpestris* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Hirundinidae

- Riparia riparia* (Linnaeus, 1758)
- Riparia diluta* (Sharpe & Wyatt, 1893)
- Riparia paludicola* (Vieillot, 1817)
- Hirundo rupestris* Scopoli, 1759
- Hirundo obscura* (Cabanis, 1850)
- Hirundo concolor* Sykes, 1833
- Hirundo rustica* Linnaeus, 1758
- Hirundo tahitica* Gmelin, 1789
- Hirundo smithii* Leach, 1818
- Hirundo daurica* Linnaeus, 1771
- Hirundo striolata* (Schlegel, 1844)
- Hirundo fluviicola* Blyth, 1855
- Delichon urbica* (Linnaeus, 1758)
- Delichon dasypus* (Bonaparte, 1850)
- Delichon nipalensis* Horsfield & Moore, 1854

Motacillidae

- Dendronanthus indicus* (Gmelin, 1789)
- Motacilla alba* Linnaeus, 1758
- Motacilla maderaspatensis* Gmelin, 1789
- Motacilla citreola* Pallas, 1776
- Motacilla flava* Linnaeus, 1758
- Motacilla cinerea* Tunstall, 1771
- Anthus richardi* Vieillot, 1818
- Anthus rufulus* Vieillot, 1818
- Anthus campestris* (Linnaeus, 1758)
- Anthus godlewskii* (Taczanowski, 1876)

Brown Rock Pipit (1856-1869)
 Eurasian Tree Pipit (1854-1855)
 Oriental Tree Pipit (1852-1853)
 Meadow Pipit (1856)
 Red-throated Pipit (1864)
 Rosy Pipit (1865)
 * Water Pipit (1871)
 * Buff-bellied Pipit (1872)
 Upland Pipit (1873)
 #Nilgiri Pipit (1870) NT

Cuckoo-Shrikes, Flycatcher-Shrikes, Trillers, Minivets, Woodshrikes

* Large Cuckoo Shrike (1072-1075)
 Bar-bellied Cuckoo Shrike (1076)
 Black-winged Cuckoo Shrike (1077)
 Black-headed Cuckoo Shrike (1078-1079)
 Pied Triller (1079a)
 Rosy Minivet (1089)
 Swinhoe's Minivet (EL)
 Ashy Minivet (1089a)
 Small Minivet (1090-1095)
 White-bellied Minivet (1096)
 Grey-chinned Minivet (1088)
 Long-tailed Minivet (1085-1087)
 Short-bellied Minivet (1084)
 Scarlet Minivet (1080-1083)
 Pied Flycatcher Shrike (1064-1066)
 Large Woodshrike (1067-1069)
 Common Woodshrike (1069-1071)

Bulbuls & Finchbills

Crested Finchbill (1111)
 Striated Bulbul (1133-1134)
 Grey-headed Bulbul (1114)
 Black-headed Bulbul (1112-1113)
 Black-crested Bulbul (1115-1117)
 Red-whiskered Bulbul (1118-1122)
 * White-eared Bulbul (1123-1124)
 * Himalayan Bulbul (1125)
 Red-vented Bulbul (1126-1132)
 #Yellow-throated Bulbul (1135) VU
 Yellow-eared Bulbul (1136)
 Blyth's Bulbul (1137)
 White-browed Bulbul (1138-1139)
 White-throated Bulbul (1140)
 Olive Bulbul (1141)
 Yellow-browed Bulbul (1143-1145)
 Brown-eared Bulbul (1147)
 Rufous-bellied Bulbul (1146)
 * Black Bulbul (1148-1151)
 #Nicobar Bulbul (1142) VU

Ioras, Chloropsis/Leafbird, Fairy-Bluebird

Common Iora (1097-1101)
 Marshall's Iora (1102)
 Jerdon's Chloropsis (1107-1108)
 Gold-fronted Chloropsis (1103-1105)
 Orange-bellied Chloropsis (1106)
 Asian Fairy-Bluebird (1109, 1110)

Anthus similis Jerdon, 1840
Anthus trivialis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Anthus hodgsoni Richmond, 1907
Anthus pratensis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Anthus cervinus (Pallas, 1811)
Anthus roseatus Blyth, 1847
Anthus spinoletta (Linnaeus, 1758)
Anthus rubrocapus (Tunstall, 1771)
Anthus sylvanus (Blyth, 1845)
Anthus nilghiriensis Sharpe, 1885

Campephagidae

Coracina macei (Lesson, 1830)
Coracina striata (Boddaert, 1783)
Coracina melanochlora (Hodgson, 1836)
Coracina melanoptera (Rüppell, 1839)
Lalage nigra (Forster, 1781)
Pericrocotus roseus (Vieillot, 1818)
Pericrocotus cantonensis Swinhoe, 1861
Pericrocotus dimaricatus (Raffles, 1822)
Pericrocotus cinnamomeus (Linnaeus, 1766)
 #*Pericrocotus erythropygus* (Jerdon, 1840)
Pericrocotus solaris Blyth, 1846
Pericrocotus ethologus Bangs & Phillips, 1914
Pericrocotus brevirostris (Vigors, 1831)
Pericrocotus flammeus (Forster, 1781)
Hemipus picotus (Sykes, 1832)
Tephrodornis gularis (Raffles, 1822)
Tephrodornis pondicerianus (Gmelin, 1789)

Pycnonotidae

Spizixos canifrons Blyth, 1845
Pycnonotus striatus (Blyth, 1842)
 #*Pycnonotus priocephalus* (Jerdon, 1839)
Pycnonotus atriceps (Temminck, 1822)
Pycnonotus melanicterus (Gmelin, 1789)
Pycnonotus jocosus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Pycnonotus leucotis (Gould, 1836)
Pycnonotus leucogenys (Gray, 1835)
Pycnonotus cafer (Linnaeus, 1766)
 #*Pycnonotus xantholaemus* (Jerdon, 1844)
 #*Pycnonotus penicillatus* Blyth, 1851
Pycnonotus flavescens Blyth, 1845
Pycnonotus luteolus (Lesson, 1841)
Alpheixus flavescens (Gould, 1836)
Iole virescens Blyth, 1845
Iole indica (Jerdon, 1839)
Hemixos flava Blyth, 1845
Hypsipetes mclellandii Horsfield, 1840
Hypsipetes leucocephalus (P.L.S. Muller, 1776)
 #*Hypsipetes nicobariensis* Moore, 1954

Irenidae

Aegithina tiphia (Linnaeus, 1758)
Aegithina nigrolutea (Marshall, 1876)
Chloropsis cochinchinensis (Gmelin, 1788)
Chloropsis aurifrons (Temminck, 1829)
Chloropsis hardwickii Jardine & Selby, 1830
Irena puella (Latham, 1790)

Shrikes

- * Red-backed Shrike (941)
- * Rufous-tailed Shrike (942-943)
- Brown Shrike (949-950a)
- Burmese Shrike (938)
- Bay-backed Shrike (939-940)
- Rufous-backed Shrike (946-948)
- Grey-backed Shrike (944-945)
- Lesser Grey Shrike (937)
- * Great Grey Shrike (936)
- * Southern Grey Shrike (933-935)
- Woodchat Shrike (951)

Waxwings & Hypocolius

- Bohemian Waxwing (1062)
- Hypocolius (1063)

Dippers

- White-throated Dipper (1772-1774)
- Brown Dipper (1776-1776)

Wrens

- Winter Wren (1769-1771)

Accentors

- Alpine Accentor (1777-1779)
- Altai Accentor (1790)
- Robin Accentor (1781)
- Rufous-breasted Accentor (1782-1783)
- Siberian Accentor (1787a) (EL)
- * Radde's Accentor (1785a)
- * Brown Accentor (1784-1785)
- Black-throated Accentor (1786-1787)
- Maroon-backed Accentor (1788)

Thrushes, Shortwings, Robins, Forktails, Wheaters

- Rufous-tailed Rock Thrush (1722)
- Blue-headed Rock Thrush (1723)
- Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush (1724)
- Blue Rock Thrush (1725-1726)
- Ceylon Whistling Thrush (1727)
- Malabar Whistling Thrush (1728)
- Blue Whistling Thrush (1729-1730)
- Pied Thrush (1731)
- Orange-headed Thrush (1733-1736)
- Siberian Thrush (1732-1732a)
- Spot-winged Thrush (1737)
- Plain-backed Thrush (1738-1739)
- Long-tailed Thrush (1740)
- Scaly Thrush (1741-1744)
- Greater Long-billed Thrush (1745)
- Lesser Long-billed Thrush (1746)
- Tickell's Thrush (1748)
- Black-breasted Thrush (1747)
- White-collared Blackbird (1749)
- Grey-winged Blackbird (1750)
- Eurasian Blackbird (1751-1757)
- Chestnut Thrush (1758-1759)
- Kessler's Thrush (1760)
- Pea's Thrush (1761) VU
- Eyebrowed Thrush (1762)
- Dark-throated Thrush (1763-1764)

Laniidae

- Lanius collurio* Linnaeus, 1758
- Lanius isabellinus* Hemprich & Ehrenberg, 1833
- Lanius cristatus* Linnaeus, 1758
- Lanius collurioides* Lesson, 1832
- Lanius vittatus* Valenciennes, 1826
- Lanius schach* Linnaeus, 1758
- Lanius tephronotus* (Vigors, 1831)
- Lanius minor* Gmelin, 1788
- Lanius excubitor* Linnaeus, 1758
- Lanius meridionalis* Temminck, 1820
- Lanius senator* Linnaeus, 1758

Bombycillidae

- Bombycilla garrulus* (Linnaeus, 1758)
- Hypocolius ampelinus* Bonaparte, 1850

Cinclididae

- Cinclus cinclus* (Linnaeus, 1758)
- Cinclus pallasii* Temminck, 1820

Troglodytidae

- Troglodytes troglodytes* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Prunellidae

- Prunella collaris* (Scopoli, 1769)
- Prunella himalayana* (Blyth, 1842)
- Prunella rubeculoides* (Moore, 1854)
- Prunella strophilata* (Blyth, 1843)
- Prunella montanella* (Pallas, 1776)
- Prunella ocularis* (Radde, 1884)
- Prunella fulvescens* (Severtzov, 1873)
- Prunella atrigularis* (Brandt, 1844)
- Prunella immaculata* (Hodgson, 1845)

Turdinae

- Monticola saxatilis* (Linnaeus, 1766)
- Monticola cinclorhynchus* (Vigors, 1832)
- Monticola rufiventris* (Jardine & Selby, 1833)
- Monticola solitarius* (Linnaeus, 1758)
- **Myiophonus blighi* (Holdsworth, 1872)
- Myiophonus horsfieldii* (Vigors, 1831)
- Myiophonus caeruleus* (Scopoli, 1786)
- **Zoothera wardii* (Blyth, 1842)
- Zoothera citrina* (Latham, 1790)
- Zoothera sibirica* (Pallas, 1776)
- **Zoothera spiloptera* (Blyth, 1847)
- Zoothera mollissima* (Blyth, 1842)
- Zoothera dixonii* (Seeböhm, 1881)
- Zoothera dauma* (Latham, 1790)
- **Zoothera monticola* Vigors, 1832
- Zoothera marginata* Blyth, 1847
- Turdus unicolor* Tickell, 1833
- **Turdus dissimilis* Blyth, 1847
- Turdus albocinctus* Royle, 1840
- Turdus boulboul* (Latham, 1790)
- Turdus merula* Linnaeus, 1758
- Turdus rubrocanus* Hodgson, 1846
- Turdus kessleri* Przevalski, 1876
- **Turdus feae* (Salvadori, 1887)
- Turdus obscurus* Gmelin, 1789
- Turdus ruficollis* Pallas, 1776

Dusky Thrush (1765)	<i>Turdus naumanni</i> Temminck, 1820
Fieldfare (1766)	<i>Turdus pilaris</i> Linnaeus, 1758
Redwing (1767) (EL)	<i>Turdus iliacus</i> Linnaeus, 1766
Song Thrush (N)	<i>Turdus philomelos</i> Brehm, 1831
Mistle Thrush (1768)	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i> Linnaeus, 1758
Could's Shortwing (1635)	# <i>Brachypteryx stellata</i> Gould, 1868
Rusty-bellied Shortwing (1636) VII	# <i>Brachypteryx hyperythra</i> Jerdon & Blyth, 1861
#White-bellied Shortwing (1637-1638) VU	# <i>Brachypteryx major</i> (Jerdon, 1844)
Lesser Shortwing (1639)	<i>Brachypteryx leucophrys</i> (Temminck, 1828)
White-browed Shortwing (1640)	<i>Brachypteryx montana</i> Horsfield, 1821
Common Nightingale (1642)	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i> (Brehm, 1831)
Siberian Rubythroat (1643)	<i>Luscinia caliope</i> (Pallas, 1776)
Himalayan Rubythroat (1647-1649)	<i>Luscinia pectoralis</i> (Gould, 1837)
Bluethroat (1644-1646a)	<i>Luscinia svecica</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)
Firethroat (1652) NT	# <i>Luscinia pectardens</i> (David, 1877)
Indian Blue Robin (1650, 1651)	<i>Luscinia brunnea</i> (Hodgson, 1837)
Siberian Blue Robin (1653)	<i>Luscinia cyane</i> (Pallas, 1776)
Orange-flanked Bush-Robin (1654-1656)	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i> (Pallas, 1773)
Golden Bush-Robin (1657-1658)	<i>Tarsiger chrysaeus</i> (Hodgson, 1845)
White-browed Bush-Robin (1659)	<i>Tarsiger indicus</i> (Vieillot, 1817)
Rufous-breasted Bush-Robin (1660)	# <i>Tarsiger hyperythrus</i> (Blyth, 1847)
Rufous-tailed Scrub-Robin (1641)	<i>Cercotrichas galactotes</i> (Temminck, 1820)
Oriental Magpie-Robin (1661-1664)	<i>Copsychus saularis</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)
White-rumped Shama (1665-1668)	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i> (Scopoli, 1786)
Indian Robin (1717-1721)	<i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i> (Linnaeus, 1776)
Eversmann's Redstart (1669)	<i>Phoenicurus erythronotus</i> (Eversmann, 1841)
Blue-capped Redstart (1670)	<i>Phoenicurus caeruleocephalus</i> (Vigors, 1831)
Black Redstart (1671-1672)	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i> (Gmelin, 1774)
Common Redstart (1673)	<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)
Hodgson's Redstart (1674)	<i>Phoenicurus hodgsoni</i> (Moore, 1854)
White-throated Redstart (1676)	<i>Phoenicurus schisticeps</i> (Gray, 1846)
Daurian Redstart (1677)	<i>Phoenicurus aureus</i> (Pallas, 1776)
Guldenstadt's Redstart (1678)	<i>Phoenicurus erythrogaster</i> (Guldenstadt, 1775)
Blue-fronted Redstart (1675)	<i>Phoenicurus frontalis</i> (Vigors, 1832)
White-capped Redstart (1716)	<i>Chalmarornis leucocephalus</i> (Vigors, 1831)
Plumbeous Redstart (1679)	<i>Rhyacornis fuliginosus</i> (Vigors, 1831)
White-bellied Redstart (1680)	<i>Hodgsonius phaeniceoides</i> (Gray, 1846)
White-tailed Robin (1681)	<i>Myiomela leucura</i> (Hodgson, 1845)
Blue-fronted Robin (1682)	# <i>Cinclidium frontale</i> Blyth, 1842
Grandala (1683)	<i>Grandala coelicolor</i> Hodgson, 1843
Little Forktail (1684)	<i>Enicurus scouleri</i> Vigors, 1832
Black-backed Forktail (1685)	<i>Enicurus immaculatus</i> (Hodgson, 1836)
Slaty-backed Forktail (1686)	<i>Enicurus schistaceus</i> (Hodgson, 1836)
Leschenault's Forktail (1687)	<i>Enicurus leschenaulti</i> (Vieillot, 1818)
Spotted Forktail (1688-1689)	<i>Enicurus maculatus</i> Vigors, 1831
Purple Cochoa (1690)	# <i>Cochoa purpurea</i> Hodgson, 1836
Green Cochoa (1691)	# <i>Cochoa viridis</i> Hodgson, 1836
Stoliczka's Bushchat (1693) VU	# <i>Saxicola macrorhyncha</i> (Stoliczka, 1872)
Hodgson's Bushchat (1694) VU	# <i>Saxicola insignis</i> Gray, 1846
Common Stonechat (1695-1698)	<i>Saxicola torquata</i> (Linnaeus, 1766)
White-tailed Stonechat (1699)	<i>Saxicola leucura</i> (Blyth, 1847)
Pied Bushchat (1700-1703)	<i>Saxicola caprata</i> (Linnaeus, 1766)
Jerdon's Bushchat (1704)	# <i>Saxicola jerdoni</i> (Blyth, 1867)
Grey Bushchat (1705)	<i>Saxicola ferrea</i> Gray, 1846
Hooded Wheatear (1713)	<i>Oenanthe monacha</i> (Temminck, 1825)
Hume's Wheatear (1714)	<i>Oenanthe alboniger</i> (Hume, 1872)
Northern Wheatear (1708)	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)
Finsch's Wheatear (1711)	<i>Oenanthe finschii</i> (Heuglin, 1869)
Variable Wheatear (1712)	<i>Oenanthe picata</i> (Blyth, 1847)
Pied Wheatear (1715)	<i>Oenanthe pleschanka</i> (Lepechin, 1770)
Rufous-tailed Wheatear (1707)	<i>Oenanthe xanthopyrma</i> (Hemprich & Ehrenberg, 1833)
Desert Wheatear (1709-1710)	<i>Oenanthe deserti</i> (Temminck, 1825)

Isabelline Wheatear (1706)

Indian Chat (1692)

Babblers, Laughingthrushes, Babaxes, Barwings, Yuhinas

Ashy-headed Laughingthrush (1272)

White-throated Laughingthrush (1273-1274)

White-crested Laughingthrush (1283-1284)

Lesser Necklaced Laughingthrush (1275-1276)

Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush (1277-1278)

Striated Laughingthrush (1279-1282)

Rufous-necked Laughingthrush (1303)

Chestnut-backed Laughingthrush (1285) NT

Yellow-throated Laughingthrush (1286)

* Wynad Laughingthrush (1287)

* Rufous-vented Laughingthrush (1288)

Ashy Laughingthrush (1291)

Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush (1292-1296)

* Giant Laughingthrush (1297) (EL)

* Spotted Laughingthrush (1298-1299)

Grey-sided Laughingthrush (1300-1302)

Spot-breasted Laughingthrush (1304-1305)

White-browed Laughingthrush (1306)

#Nilgiri Laughingthrush (1307, 1308) EN

#Grey-breasted Laughingthrush (1309-1311) NT

Streaked Laughingthrush (1312-1316)

Striped Laughingthrush (1317)

Brown-capped Laughingthrush (1318)

Blue-winged Laughingthrush (1319)

Scaly Laughingthrush (1320)

Elliot's Laughingthrush (N)

Variegated Laughingthrush (1289-1290)

Prince Henri's Laughingthrush (1321)

Black-faced Laughingthrush (1322-1323)

Red-headed Laughingthrush (1324-1330)

Red-faced *Loxia* (1331-1332)

Abbott's Babbler (1167)

Buff-breasted Babbler (1168)

Spot-throated Babbler (1164-1165)

Marsh Babbler (1160) VU

Spotted Babbler (1152-1159)

Brown-capped Babbler (1161-1163)

Large Scimitar-Babbler (1185)

* Spot-breasted Scimitar-Babbler (1184)

* Rusty-cheeked Scimitar-Babbler (1181-1183)

* Indian Scimitar-Babbler (1172-1177)

* Hodgson's Scimitar-Babbler (1168-1171)

Rufous-necked Scimitar-Babbler (1178-1180)

Lloyd's Scimitar-Babbler (1189-1190)

Coral-billed Scimitar-Babbler (1186-1188)

Slender billed Scimitar-Babbler (1191-1192)

Long-billed Wren-Babbler (1193)

Streaked Wren-Babbler (1194)

Eyebrowed Wren-Babbler (1195-1196)

Greater Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler (1197-1198)

Lesser Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler (1199)

Nepal Wren-Babbler (N)

Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler (1200) NT

#Mishmi Wren-Babbler (1201) VU

Bar-winged Wren-Babbler (1205)

Spotted Wren-Babbler (1206)

Long-tailed Wren-Babbler (1203-1204)

#Tawny-breasted Wren-Babbler (1202) VU

Oenanthe isabellina (Temminck, 1829)

Cercomela fusca (Blyth, 1851)

Timaliinae

#*Garrulax cinereifrons* Blyth, 1851

Garrulax albogularis (Gould, 1836)

Garrulax leucolophus (Hardwicke, 1815)

Garrulax monileger (Hodgson, 1836)

Garrulax pectoralis (Gould, 1836)

Garrulax striatus (Vigors, 1831)

Garrulax ruficollis (Jardine & Selby, 1833)

#*Garrulax nuchalis* Godwin-Austen, 1876

#*Garrulax galbanus* Godwin-Austen, 1874

#*Garrulax delesserti* (Jerdon, 1839)

Garrulax gularis (McClelland, 1840)

Garrulax cineraceus (Godwin-Austen, 1874)

Garrulax rufogularis (Gould, 1835)

Garrulax maximus (Verreaux, 1870)

Garrulax ocellatus (Vigors, 1831)

Garrulax caeruleatus (Hodgson, 1836)

#*Garrulax merulinus* Blyth, 1851

Garrulax sannio Swinhoe, 1867

#*Garrulax cachinnans* (Jerdon, 1839)

#*Garrulax jerdoni* Blyth, 1851

Garrulax lineatus (Vigors, 1831)

#*Garrulax virgatus* (Godwin-Austen, 1874)

#*Garrulax austeni* (Godwin-Austen, 1870)

Garrulax squamatus (Gould, 1835)

Garrulax subunicolor (Blyth, 1843)

Garrulax ellicii (Verreaux, 1870)

Garrulax variegatus (Vigors, 1831)

Garrulax henrici (Quatalet, 1892)

Garrulax affinis Blyth, 1843

Garrulax erythrocephalus (Vigors, 1832)

Loxia phoenicea (Gould, 1837)

Malacocincla abbotti Blyth, 1845

Pellorneum tickelli (Blyth, 1859)

Pellorneum albiventre (Godwin-Austen, 1877)

#*Pellorneum palustre* Gould, 1872

Pellorneum ruficeps Swainson, 1832

Pellorneum fuscicapillum (Blyth, 1849)

Pomatorhinus hypoleucos (Blyth, 1844)

Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis Gould, 1863

Pomatorhinus erythrogenys Vigors, 1832

Pomatorhinus horsfieldii Sykes, 1832

Pomatorhinus schisticeps Hodgson, 1836

Pomatorhinus ruficollis Hodgson, 1836

Pomatorhinus ochraceiceps Walden, 1873

Pomatorhinus ferruginosus Blyth, 1845

#*Xiphirhynchus superciliosus* Blyth, 1842

#*Rimator malacoptilus* Blyth, 1847

Napothera brevicaudata (Blyth, 1855)

Napothera epilepidota (Temminck, 1827)

Phoebe pygmaea (Hodgson, 1837)

Phoebe pygmaea Hodgson, 1845

#*Phoebe pygmaea* Martens & Eck, 1891

#*Spelaeornis caudatus* (Blyth, 1845)

#*Spelaeornis badeigularis* Ripley, 1948

Spelaeornis troglodytoides (Verreaux, 1870)

#*Spelaeornis formosus* (Walden, 1874)

Spelaeornis chocolatinus (Godwin-Austen & Walden, 1875)

#*Spelaeornis longicaudatus* (Moore, 1834)

- Wedge-billed Wren-Babbler (1207-1208)
 Rufous-fronted Babbler (1209) NT
 Rufous-capped Babbler (1210)
 Black-chinned Babbler (1211)
 Gold-headed Babbler (1212-1213)
 Grey-throated Babbler (1214-1217)
 Austen's Babbler (1218) VU
 Rufous-bellied Babbler (1219-1223)
 Black-headed Babbler (1224-1227)
 Yellow-breasted Babbler (1228)
 Red capped Babbler (1229)
 Yellow-eyed Babbler (1230-1232)
 Jerdon's Babbler (1233-1234) VU
 Spiny Babbler (1235)
 Common Babbler (1253-1254)
 Striated Babbler (1255-1256)
 Slender-billed Babbler (1257) VU
 Large Grey Babbler (1258)
 Indian Rufous Babbler (1259-1260)
 Jungle Babbler (1261-1265)
 Ceylon Rufous Babbler (1266)
 White-headed Babbler (1267-1268)
 Chinese Babax (1270)
 Giant Babax (1271) (EL) NT
 Silver-eared Leiothrix (1333-1334)
 Red-billed Leiothrix (1335-1337)
 Cutia (1339)
 Rufous-bellied Shrike-Babbler (1340)
 Red-winged Shrike Babbler (1341)
 Green Shrike Babbler (1342-1344)
 Chestnut-throated Shrike-Babbler (1345)
 Chestnut-fronted Shrike-Babbler (1346)
 White-hooded Babbler (1347)
 Rusty-fronted Barwing (1348-1351)
 Hoary-throated Barwing (1352-1353)
 Austen's Barwing (1354-1355)
 Blue-winged Minla (1362)
 Bar-throated Minla (1358-1361)
 Red-tailed Minla (1357)
 Gold-breasted Tit-Babbler (1376-1377)
 Yellow-throated Tit-Babbler (1378)
 Rufous-winged Tit-Babbler (1379)
 White-browed Tit-Babbler (1380-1383)
 Chinese Tit-Babbler (1385a) (EL)
 * Streak-throated Tit-Babbler (1385)
 * Brown-throated Tit-Babbler (1384)
 Rufous-throated Tit-Babbler (1386-1387)
 * Rusty-capped Tit-Babbler (1388)
 Quaker Tit-Babbler (1389-1391)
 Nepal Tit-Babbler (1392-1394)
 Rufous-backed Sibia (1395)
 Rufous Sibia (1396-1398)
 Grey Sibia (1399)
 Beautiful Sibia (1400)
 Long-tailed Sibia (1401)
 Striated Yuhina (1363-1365)
 White-naped Yuhina (1366)
 Yellow-naped Yuhina (1367-1370)
 Stripe-throated Yuhina (1371-1372)
 Rufous-vented Yuhina (1373)
 Black-chinned Yuhina (1374)
 White-bellied Yuhina (1375)
 * *Sphenocichla humei* (Mandelli, 1873)
Stachyris rufifrons Hume, 1873
Stachyris ruficeps Blyth, 1847
Stachyris pyrrhops Blyth, 1844
Stachyris chrysaea Blyth, 1844
Stachyris nigriceps Blyth, 1844
#Stachyris oglei (Godwin-Austen, 1877)
Dumetia hyperythra (Franklin, 1831)
Rhopocichla atriceps (Jerdon, 1839)
Macronous gularis (Horsfield, 1822)
Timalia pileata Horsfield, 1821
Chrysomma sinense (Gmelin, 1789)
#Chrysomma alirostre Jerdon, 1862
Turdoides nipalensis (Hodgson, 1836)
Turdoides caudatus (Dumont, 1823)
Turdoides earlei (Blyth, 1844)
#Turdoides longirostris (Moore, 1854)
Turdoides malcolmi (Sykes, 1832)
Turdoides subrufus (Jerdon, 1839)
Turdoides striatus (Dumont, 1823)
Turdoides rufescens (Blyth, 1847)
Turdoides affinis (Jerdon, 1847)
Babax lanceolatus (Verreaux, 1870)
#Babax waddelli Dresser, 1905
Leiothrix argentauris (Hodgson, 1838)
Leiothrix lutea (Scopoli, 1786)
Cutia nipalensis Hodgson, 1837
#Pteruthius rufiventer Blyth, 1842
Pteruthius flaviscapitis (Temminck, 1836)
Pteruthius xanthochlorus Gray, 1846
Pteruthius melanotis Hodgson, 1847
Pteruthius aenobarbus (Temminck, 1836)
Gampsorhynchus rufus Blyth, 1844
Actinodura egertoni Gould, 1936
Actinodura nipalensis (Hodgson, 1836)
Actinodura waldeni Godwin-Austen, 1874
Minla cyanouroptera (Hodgson, 1838)
Minla strigula (Hodgson, 1838)
Minla ignota Hodgson, 1837
Alcippe chrysotis (Blyth, 1845)
#Alcippe cinerea (Blyth, 1847)
Alcippe castaneiceps (Hodgson, 1837)
Alcippe vitipectus (Hodgson, 1837)
Alcippe striatocollis (Verreaux, 1870)
Alcippe cinereiceps (Verreaux, 1870)
Alcippe ludlowi (Kinnear, 1935)
Alcippe rufogularis (Mandelli, 1873)
Alcippe dubia (Hume, 1874)
Alcippe poioicephala (Jerdon, 1844)
Alcippe nipalensis (Hodgson, 1837)
Heterophasia annectans (Blyth, 1847)
Heterophasia capistrata (Vigors, 1831)
#Heterophasia gracilis (McClelland, 1840)
Heterophasia pulchella (Godwin-Austen, 1874)
Heterophasia picuoides (Hodgson, 1839)
Yuhina castaneiceps (Moore, 1854)
Yuhina bakeri Rothschild, 1926
Yuhina flavicollis Hodgson, 1836
Yuhina gularis Hodgson, 1836
Yuhina occipitalis Hodgson, 1836
Yuhina nigrimenta Hodgson, 1845
Yuhina zantholeuca (Hodgson, 1844)

Myzornis (1338)

Parrotbills

Bearded Parrotbill (1235)
Great Parrotbill (1236)
Brown Parrotbill (1237)
Grey-headed Parrotbill (1249-1250)
Black-breasted Parrotbill (1251) VU
Spot-breasted Parrotbill (1252)
Fulvous-fronted Parrotbill (1238-1239)
Black-throated Parrotbill (1239a-1244)
Lesser Rufous-headed Parrotbill (1245-1246)
Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbill (1247-1248)

Goldcrest, Prinias, Tesias, Warblers

Goldcrest (1628-1631)
Streaked Fantail-Warbler (1498-1500a)
Golden-headed Fantail-Warbler (1496-1497)
Streaked Scrub-Warbler (1533)
Long-tailed Prinia (1531-1532) NT
Brown Prinia (1526-1528)
Black-throated Prinia (1529-1530)
Hodgson's Prinia (1507) VU
Rufous-fronted Prinia (1506)
Beavan's Prinia (1501)
Franklin's Prinia (1502-1505)
Graceful Prinia (1508-1509)
Jungle Prinia (1519-1523)
Yellow-bellied Prinia (1524-1525)
Ashy Prinia (1515-1518)
* Plain Prinia (1510-1514)
Chestnut-headed Tesia (1473)
Slaty-bellied Tesia (1472)
Grey-bellied Tesia (1471)
Asian Bush-Warbler (N)
Blanford's Bush-Warbler (1474-1475)
Japanese Bush-Warbler (1476)
Brown-flanked Bush-Warbler (1477-1478)
Chestnut-crowned Bush-Warbler (1479-1480)
Aberrant Bush-Warbler (1481-1483)
Yellow-bellied Bush-Warbler (1484)
Grey-sided Bush-Warbler (1485-1487)
Cetti's Bush-Warbler (1488)
Spotted Bush-Warbler (1489-1490)
Long-billed Bush-Warbler (1491) NT
Chinese Bush-Warbler (1492)
Brown Bush-Warbler (1493)
Russet Bush-Warbler (N)
Ceylon Bush-Warbler (1494)
Streaked Grasshopper-Warbler (1544)
Pale Grasshopper-Warbler (1545)
Rusty-rumped Grasshopper-Warbler (1542-1543)
Moustached Warbler (1495)
Sedge Warbler (N)
Black-browed Reed-Warbler (1555)
Paddyfield Warbler (1557-1558)
Blunt-winged Warbler (1559-1560)
Eurasian Reed-Warbler (1555a)
Blyth's Reed-Warbler (1556)
Eurasian Great Reed-Warbler (1553)
Oriental Great Reed-Warbler (1554)
Large-billed Reed-Warbler (1561)

Myzornis pyrrhura Blyth, 1843

Panurinae

Panurus biarmicus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Conostoma oemodum Hodgson, 1841
Paradoxornis unicolor (Hodgson, 1843)
Paradoxornis gularis Gray, 1845
**Paradoxornis flavirostris* Gould, 1836
**Paradoxornis guttaticollis* David, 1871
Paradoxornis fulvifrons (Hodgson, 1845)
Paradoxornis nipalensis (Hodgson, 1837)
**Paradoxornis atrisuperciliaris* (Godwin-Austen, 1877)
**Paradoxornis ruficeps* Blyth, 1842

Sylvinae

Regulus regulus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Cisticola juncidis (Rafinesque, 1810)
Cisticola exilis (Vigors & Horsfield, 1827)
Scotocerca inquieta (Cretzschmar, 1830)
**Prinia burnesii* (Blyth, 1844)
Prinia crinigera Hodgson, 1836
Prinia atrogularis (Moore, 1854)
**Prinia cinereocapilla* (Moore, 1854)
Prinia buehneri Blyth, 1844
Prinia rufescens Blyth, 1847
Prinia hodgsonii Blyth, 1844
Prinia gracilis (Lichtenstein, 1823)
Prinia sylvatica Jerdon, 1840
Prinia fluviventris (Delessert, 1840)
Prinia socialis Sykes, 1852
Prinia inornata Sykes, 1852
Tesia castaneiventris (Burton, 1836)
Tesia olivacea (McClelland, 1840)
Tesia cyaniventris Hodgson, 1837
Urasphena squameiceps (Swinhoe, 1863)
Cettia pallidipes (Blanford, 1872)
Cettia diphone (Kittlitz, 1830)
Cettia fortipes (Horsfield, 1845)
Cettia major (Moore, 1854)
Cettia flavolivacea (Blyth, 1845)
Cettia acanthizoides (Verreaux, 1871)
Cettia brunneifrons (Hodgson, 1845)
Cettia cetti (Temminck, 1820)
Bradypterus thoracicus (Blyth, 1845)
**Bradypterus major* (Brooks, 1871)
Bradypterus tosanowskii (Swinhoe, 1871)
Bradypterus luteiventris (Hodgson, 1845)
Bradypterus mandelli (Brooks, 1875)
Bradypterus palliseri (Blyth, 1851)
Locustella lanceolata (Temminck, 1840)
Locustella naevia (Boddaert, 1783)
Locustella certhiola (Pallas, 1811)
Acrocephalus melanopogon (Temminck, 1823)
Acrocephalus schoenobaenus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Acrocephalus bistrigiceps Swinhoe, 1860
Acrocephalus agricola (Jerdon, 1845)
Acrocephalus concinens (Swinhoe, 1870)
Acrocephalus scirpaceus (Hermann, 1804)
Acrocephalus dumetorum Blyth, 1849
Acrocephalus arundinaceus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Acrocephalus orientalis (Temminck & Schlegel, 1847)
Acrocephalus orinus Oberholser, 1905

- Indian Great Reed-Warbler (1550-1552)
 Thick-billed Warbler (1549)
 Booted Warbler (1562-1563)
 Olivaceous Warbler (EL)
 Upcher's Warbler (1564)
 Mountain Tailorbird (1541)
 Common Tailorbird (1535-1539)
 Black-necked Tailorbird (1540)
 Stoliczka's Tit-Warbler (1633-1634)
 Crested Tit-Warbler (1632) (EL)
 * Common Chiffchaff (1574-1575)
 * Mountain Chiffchaff (1574)
 Plain Leaf-Warbler (1577)
 Willow Warbler (1572-1573) (EL)
 Dusky Warbler (1584-1586)
 Smoky Warbler (1582-1583)
 * Tickell's Warbler (1579)
 * Buff-throated Warbler (1580)
 Olivaceous Leaf-Warbler (1581)
 Radde's Warbler (N)
 Yellow-streaked Warbler (EL)
 Orange-barred Leaf-Warbler (1587-1589)
 Chinese Leaf-Warbler (N)
 Grey-faced Leaf-Warbler (1597-1599)
 * Lemon-rumped Warbler (1594-1596)
 Brooks's Leaf-Warbler (1593)
 * Yellow-browed Warbler (1592)
 * Hume's Warbler (1590-1591)
 Arctic Leaf Warbler (1600)
 Greenish Leaf Warbler (1602-1605)
 Pale-legged Leaf-Warbler (1605a)
 Large-billed Leaf-Warbler (1601)
 Tytler's Leaf-Warbler (1578)
 * Western Crowned Warbler (1606)
 * Eastern Crowned Warbler (1607)
 Blyth's Leaf-Warbler (1608-1611)
 Black-browed Leaf-Warbler (1612)
 * Gold-spectacled Flycatcher-Warbler (1615)
 * Whistler's Flycatcher-Warbler (1614)
 * Grey-crowned Flycatcher-Warbler (1615a)
 Grey-headed Flycatcher-Warbler (1616-1619)
 White-spectacled Flycatcher-Warbler (1613)
 Grey-cheeked Flycatcher-Warbler (1620)
 Chestnut-crowned Flycatcher-Warbler (1621)
 Broad-billed Flycatcher-Warbler (1627)
 Rufous faced Flycatcher-Warbler (1626)
 Black-faced Flycatcher-Warbler (1624-1625)
 Yellow-bellied Flycatcher-Warbler (1622-1623)
 Striated Marsh-Warbler (1548)
 Bristled Grass-Warbler (1547) VU
 Rufous-rumped Grass-Warbler (1534) NT
 * Broad-tailed Grass-Warbler (1546) VU
 Garden Warbler (N)
 Greater Whitethroat (1566)
 * Common Lesser Whitethroat (1567-1568)
 * Hume's Lesser Whitethroat (1570)
 * Desert Lesser Whitethroat (1569)
 Desert Warbler (1571)
 Banded Warbler (1564a)
 Orphean Warbler (1565)
 Menetries's Warbler (1571a)
Acrocephalus stentoreus (Hemprich & Ehrenberg, 1833)
Acrocephalus aedon (Pallas, 1776)
Hippolais caligata (Lichtenstein, 1823)
Hippolais pallida (Hemprich & Ehrenberg, 1833)
Hippolais languida (Hemprich & Ehrenberg, 1833)
Orthotomus cuculatus Temminck, 1836
Orthotomus sutorius (Pennant, 1769)
Orthotomus atrigularis Temminck, 1836
Leptopoeile sophiae Severtzov, 1873
Leptopoeile elegans Przevalski, 1867
Phylloscopus collybita (Vieillot, 1817)
Phylloscopus sindianus Brooks, 1879
Phylloscopus neglectus Hume, 1870
Phylloscopus trochilus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Phylloscopus fuscatus (Blyth, 1842)
Phylloscopus fulgiventis (Hodgson, 1846)
Phylloscopus affinis (Tickell, 1833)
Phylloscopus subaffinis Ogilvie-Grant, 1900
Phylloscopus griseolus Blyth, 1847
Phylloscopus schwarzi (Radde, 1863)
Phylloscopus armandi (Milne-Edwards, 1865)
Phylloscopus pulcher Blyth, 1845
Phylloscopus sichuanensis Olson, Alström & Colston, 1992
Phylloscopus maculipennis (Blyth, 1847)
Phylloscopus chloronotus (G.R. Gray & J.E. Gray, 1846)
Phylloscopus subviridis (Brooks, 1872)
Phylloscopus inornatus (Blyth, 1842)
Phylloscopus humei (Brooks, 1878)
Phylloscopus borealis (Blasius, 1858)
Phylloscopus trochiloides (Sundevall, 1837)
Phylloscopus tenellipes Swinhoe, 1860
Phylloscopus magnirostris Blyth, 1843
 * *Phylloscopus tytleri* Brooks, 1872
Phylloscopus occipitalis (Blyth, 1845)
Phylloscopus coronatus (Temminck & Schlegel, 1847)
Phylloscopus reguloides (Blyth, 1842)
 * *Phylloscopus cantator* (Tickell, 1833)
Seicercus burkii (Burton, 1836)
Seicercus whistleri Ticehurst, 1926
Seicercus tephrocephalus (Anderson, 1871)
Seicercus xanthoschistos (G.R. Gray & J.E. Gray, 1846)
Seicercus affinis (Moore, 1854)
Seicercus poliogenys (Blyth, 1847)
Seicercus castaneiceps (Blyth, 1845)
 * *Tichellia hodgsoni* (Moore, 1854)
Abroscopus albogularis (Moore, 1854)
Abroscopus schisticeps (G.E. Gray & J.R. Gray, 1846)
Abroscopus superciliosus (Blyth, 1859)
Megalurus palustris Horsfield, 1821
 * *Chaetornis striatus* (Jerdon, 1841)
Graminicola bengalensis Jerdon, 1863
 * *Schoenicola platyura* (Jerdon, 1844)
Sylvia borin (Boddaert, 1783)
Sylvia communis (Latham, 1787)
Sylvia curruca (Linnaeus, 1758)
Sylvia althaea Hume, 1878
Sylvia minula Hume, 1873
Sylvia nana (Hemprich & Ehrenberg, 1833)
Sylvia nisoria (Bechstein, 1795)
Sylvia hortensis (Gmelin, 1789)
Sylvia mystacea Ménétries, 1832

Flycatchers

Brown-chested Jungle-Flycatcher (1402)
 Spotted Flycatcher (1403, 1404)
 Sooty Flycatcher (1405-1406)
 Asian Brown Flycatcher (1407)
 Rusty-tailed Flycatcher (1409)
 Brown-breasted Flycatcher (1408)
 Ferruginous Flycatcher (1410)
 Yellow-rumped Flycatcher (N)
 Slaty-backed Flycatcher (1418)
 Orange-gorgeted Flycatcher (1414)
 Red-throated Flycatcher (1411-1412)
 Kashmir Flycatcher (1413) VU
 White-gorgeted Flycatcher (1415-1416)
 Rufous-breasted Blue Flycatcher (1417)
 Little Pied Flycatcher (1419-1420)
 Ultramarine Flycatcher (1421-1422)
 Slaty-blue Flycatcher (1423-1425)
 Sapphire Flycatcher (1426)
 #Black-and-Orange Flycatcher (1427) NT
 Verditer Flycatcher (1445)
 Dusky-blue Flycatcher (1444)
 #Nilgiri Flycatcher (1446) NT
 Large Niltava (1428)
 Small Niltava (1429-1430)
 Rufous-bellied Niltava (1431-1432)
 Vivid Niltava (1433)
 White-tailed Blue-Flycatcher (1434)
 White-bellied Blue-Flycatcher (1435)
 Brooks's Flycatcher (1436-1438)
 Falc Blue-Flycatcher (1439)
 Blue-throated Flycatcher (1440)
 Large-billed Blue-Flycatcher (1441)
 Tickell's Blue-Flycatcher (1442-1443)
 Pygmy Blue-Flycatcher (1447)
 Grey-headed Flycatcher (1448-1449)

Monarch-Flycatchers & Paradise-Flycatchers

Asian Paradise-Flycatcher (1460-1464)
 Black-naped Monarch-Flycatcher (1465-1469)

Fantail-Flycatchers

Yellow-bellied Fantail-Flycatcher (1450)
 White-throated Fantail-Flycatcher (1454-1459)
 White-browed Fantail-Flycatcher (1451-1453)

Whistlers

Mangrove Whistler (1470)

Long-tailed Tits

White-cheeked Tit (1821)
 Red-headed Tit (1818-1820)
 White-throated Tit (1822)
 Rufous-fronted Tit (1823)

Penduline-Tits

Eurasian Penduline-Tit (1817)
 Pire-capped Tit (1815-1816)

Tits

• Marsh Tit (1801) (EL)

Muscicapinae

#*Rhinomyias brunneata* (Slater, 1897)
Muscicapa striata (Pallas, 1764)
Muscicapa sibirica Gmelin, 1789
Muscicapa dauurica Pallas, 1811
Muscicapa ruficauda Swainson, 1838
 #*Muscicapa mutui* (Layard, 1854)
Muscicapa ferruginea (Hodgson, 1846)
Ficedula zanthopygia (Hay, 1845)
Ficedula hodgsonii (Verreaux, 1871)
Ficedula strophilata (Hodgson, 1837)
Ficedula parva (Bechstein, 1792)
 #*Ficedula subrubra* (Hartert & Steinbacher, 1934)
Ficedula monileger (Hodgson, 1845)
Ficedula hyperythra (Blyth, 1842)
Ficedula westermanni (Sharpe, 1888)
Ficedula superciliosa (Jerdon, 1840)
Ficedula tricolor (Hodgson, 1845)
Ficedula sapphirina (Blyth, 1843)
 #*Ficedula nigrorufa* (Jerdon, 1839)
Eumyias thalassina (Swainson, 1838)
 #*Eumyias sordida* (Walden, 1870)
 #*Eumyias albicaudata* (Jerdon, 1840)
Niltava grandis (Blyth, 1842)
Niltava macgrigorica (Burton, 1836)
Niltava sundara (Hodgson, 1837)
Niltava vivida (Swinhoe, 1864)
Cyornis coheretus (Muller, 1835)
 #*Cyornis pallipes* (Jerdon, 1840)
Cyornis poliogenys Brooks, 1879
Cyornis unicolor Blyth, 1843
Cyornis rubeculoides (Vigors, 1831)
Cyornis banyumas (Horsfield, 1821)
Cyornis tickelliae Blyth, 1843
Muscicapeila hodgsoni (Moore, 1854)
Culicicapa ceylonensis (Swainson, 1820)

Monarchinae

Terpsiphone paradisi (Linnaeus, 1758)
Hypothymis azurea (Boddaert, 1783)

Rhipidurinae

Rhipidura hypoxantha Blyth, 1843
Rhipidura albicollis (Vieillot, 1818)
Rhipidura aureola Lesson, 1830

Pachycephalinae

Pachycephala grisola (Blyth, 1843)

Aegithalidae

Aegithalos leucogenys (Moores, 1854)
Aegithalos concinnus (Gould, 1855)
 #*Aegithalos niveogularis* (Gould, 1855)
Aegithalos louschistos (Blyth, 1844)

Remizidae

Remiz pendulinus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Cephalopyrus flammiceps (Burton, 1836)

Paridae

Parus pulchris Linnaeus, 1758

Simla Crested Tit (1804)
 Rufous-bellied Crested Tit (1805-1806a)
 Spot-winged Crested Tit (1802)
 Coal Tit (1803)
 Brown Crested Tit (1807-1808)
 Great Tit (1796-1797)
 Green-backed Tit (1799)
 #Pied Tit (1798) VU
 Black-lored Yellow Tit (1809-1811)
 Black-spotted Yellow Tit (1812-1812a)
 * Azure Tit (1800a)
 * Yellow-breasted Tit (1800)
 Yellow-browed Tit (1813-1814)
 Sultan Tit (1789)

Nuthatches, Wallcreeper

* Eurasian Nuthatch (1825) (EL)
 * Chestnut-vented Nuthatch (1826)
 * Kashmir Nuthatch (1824)
 Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch (1827-1831)
 White-tailed Nuthatch (1834-1835)
 White-cheeked Nuthatch (1832-1833)
 Eastern Rock Nuthatch (1896)
 Velvet-fronted Nuthatch (1838)
 Beautiful Nuthatch (1837) VU
 Wallcreeper (1839)

Tree-Creepers, Creepers

Eurasian Tree-Creeper (1842-1844)
 Bar-tailed Tree-Creeper (1845-1848)
 Rusty-flanked Tree Creeper (1851)
 Brown-throated Tree-Creeper (1849-1850)
 Spotted Creeper (1840-1841)

Flowerpeckers

Thick-billed Flowerpecker (1892-1894)
 Yellow-vented Flowerpecker (1896)
 Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker (1896)
 Legge's Flowerpecker (1897)
 Orange-bellied Flowerpecker (1898)
 Tickell's Flowerpecker (1899-1900)
 Plain Flowerpecker (1901-1903)
 Fire-breasted Flowerpecker (1905)
 Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker (1904)

Sunbirds & Spiderhunters

Ruby-checked Sunbird (1906)
 Purple-rumped Sunbird (1907-1908)
 Small Sunbird (1909)
 Van Hasselt's Sunbird (1910)
 Olive-backed Sunbird (1913-1915)
 Purple Sunbird (1916-1918)
 Loten's Sunbird (1911-1912)
 Mrs. Gould's Sunbird (1919-1921)
 Green-tailed Sunbird (1922-1924)
 Black-throated Sunbird (1925-1926)
 Crimson Sunbird (1927-1929a)
 Fire-tailed Sunbird (1930)
 Little Spiderhunter (1931)
 Streaked Spiderhunter (1932)

Parus rufonuchalis Blyth, 1849
Parus rubidiventris Blyth, 1847
Parus melanolophus Vigors, 1831
Parus ater Linnaeus, 1758
Parus dichrous Blyth, 1844
Parus major Linnaeus, 1758
Parus monticolus Vigors, 1831
 #*Parus nuchalis* Jerdon, 1844
Parus xanthogenys Vigors, 1831
Parus spilonotus Bonaparte, 1850
Parus cyanus Pallas, 1770
Parus flavipectus Severtzov, 1873
Sylviparus modestus Burton, 1836
Melanochlora sultanea (Hodgson, 1837)

Sittidae

Sitta europaea Linnaeus, 1758
Sitta nagaensis Godwin-Austen, 1874
Sitta cashmirensis Brooks, 1871
Sitta castanea Lesson, 1830
Sitta himalayensis Jardine & Selby, 1835
Sitta leucopsis Gould, 1850
Sitta tephronota Sharpe, 1872
Sitta frontalis Swainson, 1820
 #*Sitta formosa* Blyth, 1843
Tichodroma muraria (Linnaeus, 1766)

Certhiidae

Certhia familiaris Linnaeus, 1758
Certhia himalayana Vigors, 1832
Certhia nipalensis Blyth, 1845
Certhia discolor Blyth, 1845
Salpornis spilonotus (Franklin, 1831)

Dicaeidae

Dicaeum agile (Tickell, 1833)
Dicaeum chrysorrheum Temminck, 1829
Dicaeum melanoxanthum (Blyth, 1843)
 #*Dicaeum vincens* (Sclater, 1872)
Dicaeum trigonostigma (Scopoli, 1786)
Dicaeum erythrorhynchos (Latham, 1790)
Dicaeum concolor Jerdon, 1840
Dicaeum ignipectus (Blyth, 1843)
Dicaeum cruentatum (Linnaeus, 1758)

Neectariniidae

Anthreptes singalensis (Gmelin, 1789)
Nectarinia zeylonica (Linnaeus, 1766)
Nectarinia minima (Sykes, 1832)
Nectarinia sperula (Linnaeus, 1766)
Nectarinia jugularis Linnaeus, 1766
Nectarinia asiatica (Latham, 1790)
Nectarinia lotenia (Linnaeus, 1766)
Aethopyga gouldiae (Gould, 1831)
Aethopyga nipalensis (Hodgson, 1836)
Aethopyga saturata (Hodgson, 1836)
Aethopyga siparaja (Raffles, 1822)
Aethopyga ignicauda (Hodgson, 1836)
Arachnothera longirostra (Latham, 1790)
Arachnothera magna (Hodgson, 1836)

White-eyes

Ceylon White-eye (1937)
Oriental White-eye (1933-1936)

Buntings

Crested Bunting (2060)
Yellowhammer (N)
Pine Bunting (2042)
* Rock Bunting (2051-2052)
* Godlewski's Bunting (2053-2054)
Grey-necked Bunting (2050)
Ortolan Bunting (2049)
White-capped Bunting (2048)
Striolated Bunting (2057)
Grey-headed Bunting (2055-2055a)
Little Bunting (2058)
Yellow-breasted Bunting (2046)
Chestnut Bunting (2045)
Black-headed Bunting (2043)
Red-headed Bunting (2044)
Black-faced Bunting (2047)
Reed Bunting (2058-2059)
Pallas's Bunting (N)
Rustic Bunting (N)
Corn Bunting (2041)

Finches

Chaffinch (1979)
Brambling (1980)
Fire-fronted Serin (1998)
* Yellow-breasted Greenfinch (1990, 1992)
* Black-headed Greenfinch (1991)
Eurasian Siskin (N)
Tibetan Siskin (1993)
Eurasian Goldfinch (1987-1989)
Twite (1995-1996)
Eurasian Linnet (1994)
Hodgson's Mountain-Finch (1999-2000)
Black-headed Mountain-Finch (2001-2005)
Spectacled Finch (1997)
Crimson-winged Finch (2009)
Trumpeter Finch (2006)
Mongolian Finch (2007)
Black-billed Finch (2008)
Blanford's Rosefinch (2016)
Dark-breasted Rosefinch (2014-2015)
Common Rosefinch (2010-2013)
Beautiful Rosefinch (2023-2024)
Pink-browed Rosefinch (2017)
Vinaceous Rosefinch (2017a)
Dark-rumped Rosefinch (2025)
Three-banded Rosefinch (2026)
* Spot-winged Rosefinch (2019)
* Red-mantled Rosefinch (2018)
White-browed Rosefinch (2020-2022)
Streaked Great Rosefinch (2028)
Common Great Rosefinch (2027)
Red-fronted Rosefinch (2029-2031)
Crimson-browed Finch (2033)
Japanese Grosbeak (EL)
Scarlet Finch (2034)
Red Crossbill (2032)

Zosteropidae

Zosterops ceylonensis Holdsworth, 1872
Zosterops palpebrosus (Temminck, 1824)

Emberizinae

Melophus lathamii (Gray, 1831)
Emberiza citrinella (Linnaeus, 1758)
Emberiza leucocephala Gmelin, 1771
Emberiza cia Linnaeus, 1766
Emberiza godiewskii Taczanowski, 1874
Emberiza kucharani Blyth, 1845
Emberiza hortulana Linnaeus, 1758
Emberiza steurartii (Blyth, 1854)
Emberiza striolata (Lichtenstein, 1823)
Emberiza fucata Pallas, 1776
Emberiza pusilla Pallas, 1776
Emberiza aureola Pallas, 1773
Emberiza rutila Pallas, 1776
Emberiza melanocephala Scopoli, 1769
Emberiza truniceps Brandt, 1841
Emberiza spodocephala Pallas, 1776
Emberiza schoeniclus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Emberiza pallasi (Cabanis, 1851)
Emberiza rustica Pallas, 1776
Miliaria calandra Linnaeus, 1758

Fringillidae

Fringilla coelebs Linnaeus, 1758
Fringilla montifringilla Linnaeus, 1758
Serinus pusillus (Pallas, 1811)
Carduelis spinoides Vigors, 1831
Carduelis ambigua (Oustalet, 1896)
Carduelis spinus Linnaeus, 1758
Carduelis thibetana (Hume, 1872)
Carduelis carduelis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Carduelis flavirostris (Linnaeus, 1758)
Carduelis cannabina (Linnaeus, 1758)
Leucosticte nemoralis (Hodgson, 1836)
Leucosticte brandti Bonaparte, 1850
Calocanthus burtoni (Gould, 1838)
Rhodopechys sanguinea (Gould, 1838)
Bucanetes githagineus (Lichtenstein, 1823)
Bucanetes mongolicus (Swinhoe, 1870)
Rhodospiza obscura (Lichtenstein, 1823)
Carpodacus rubescens (Blanford, 1872)
Carpodacus nipalensis (Hodgson, 1836)
Carpodacus erythrinus (Pallas, 1770)
Carpodacus paicherrinus (Moore, 1853)
Carpodacus rodochrois (Vigors, 1831)
Carpodacus vinaceus Verreaux, 1871
Carpodacus edwardsii Verreaux, 1871
Carpodacus trifasciatus Verreaux, 1871
Carpodacus rodopeplus (Vigors, 1831)
Carpodacus rhodochlamys (Brandt, 1843)
Carpodacus thura Bonaparte & Schlegel, 1850
Carpodacus rubicilloides Przevalski, 1876
Carpodacus rubicilla (Guldenstadt, 1775)
Carpodacus puniceus (Blyth, 1845)
Propryrrhula subhimachala (Hodgson, 1836)
Eophona personata (Temminck & Schlegel, 1848)
Haematospiza sipahi (Hodgson, 1836)
Loxia curvirostra Linnaeus, 1758

Brown Bullfinch (2036-2037)
Orange Bullfinch (2040)
Red-headed Bullfinch (2039)
Beavan's Bullfinch (2038)
Hawfinch (1981)
Black-and-Yellow Grosbeak (1982)
Collared Grosbeak (1983)
Spotted-winged Grosbeak (1986)
White-winged Grosbeak (1984-1985)
Gold-naped Black Finch (2035)

Munias (Estrildid Finches)

Red Munia (1964)
#Green Munia (1965) VU
White-throated Munia (1966)
White-rumped Munia (1967-1970)
Black-throated Munia (1971-1973)
Spotted Munia (1974-1975)
Black-headed Munia (1976-1978)
Java Munia (1978a) (Int.)

Sparrows & Snowfinches

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Spanish Sparrow (1940)
Sind Sparrow (1945)
Cinnamon Tree Sparrow (1946-1947)
Dead Sea Sparrow (1947a)
Eurasian Tree Sparrow (1941-1944)
Yellow-throated Sparrow (1948-1949)
Eurasian Rock Sparrow (1950)
Pale Rock Sparrow (EL)
Pallas Snowfinch (1951) (EL)
Tibetan Snowfinch (1952)
Mandell's Snowfinch (1953)
Rufous-necked Snowfinch (1954)
Plain-backed Snowfinch (1955)
Small Snowfinch (1956) (EL)

Weavers

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Streaked Weaver (1962-1963)
Haya Weaver (1957-1959)
Finn's Weaver (1960-1960a) VU

Starlings & Mynas

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Spot-winged Starling (984)
Ceylon Starling (993)
Gray-headed Starling (967-989)
White-headed Starling (990-992)
Brahminy Starling (994)
Daurian Starling (995)
White-shouldered Starling (1005)
Rosy Starling (996)
Common Starling (997-1001)
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Common Myna (1006-1007)
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Jungle Myna (1009-1011)
* Great-tufted Myna (1012)
Collared Myna (1013)
Gold-crested Myna (1014)

Pyrrhula nipalensis Hodgson, 1836
#*Pyrrhula aurantiaca* Gould, 1858
Pyrrhula erythrocephala Vigors, 1832
Pyrrhula erythraea Blyth, 1862
Coccothraustes coccothraustes (Linnaeus, 1758)
Mycerobas icteroides (Vigors, 1831)
Mycerobas affinis (Blyth, 1855)
Mycerobas melanozanthos Hodgson, 1836
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#*Amandava formosa* (Latham, 1790)
Lonchura malabarica (Linnaeus, 1758)
Lonchura striata (Linnaeus, 1766)
Lonchura kelaarti (Jerdon, 1863)
Lonchura punctulata (Linnaeus, 1758)
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#*Passer pyrrhonotus* Blyth, 1844
Passer rutilans Temminck, 1835
Passer moabiticus Tristram, 1864
Passer montanus (Linnaeus, 1758)
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Petronia petronia (Linnaeus, 1766)
Petronia brachydactyla (Bonaparte, 1850)
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Montifringilla adamsi Adams, 1858
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Pyrgilauda ruficollis Blanford, 1871
Pyrgilauda blanfordi Hume, 1876
Pyrgilauda davidiana (Verreaux, 1871)

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Ploceus benghalensis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Ploceus manyar (Horsfield, 1821)
Ploceus philippinus (Linnaeus, 1766)
#*Ploceus megarhynchus* Hume, 1869

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#*Saraglossa spiloptera* (Vigors, 1831)
#*Sturnus albofrontatus* (Layard, 1874)
Sturnus malabaricus (Gmelin, 1789)
#*Sturnus erythropygius* (Blyth, 1846)
Sturnus pagodarum (Gmelin, 1789)
Sturnus eturninus (Pallas, 1776)
Sturnus sinensis (Gmelin, 1788)
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Acridotheres grandis Moore, 1858
#*Acridotheres albocinctus* Godwin-Austen & Walden, 1875
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 #*Dicrurus andamanensis* Beavan, 1867
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 #*Dendrocitta leucogastra* Gould, 1833
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 #*Dendrocitta bayleyi* Tytler, 1868
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ABBREVIATIONS USED

Symbols	Description
(225-258)	Numbers within brackets after the common names are the numbers given to species in Ripley's (1982) <i>Synopsis</i> , which was also followed in Ali & Ripley's <i>Handbook</i> .
(N)	New: Indicates that the species is a recent record for the Indian region, and thus, will not have a <i>Synopsis</i> No.
(Int)	An introduced species, which is now breeding in the wild.
(EL)	Extralimital: A species that has not been recorded from the Indian region, but could also possibly occur here.
(deleted)	A species earlier listed in the Indian checklist, but has now been excluded due to the doubtful authenticity of the earlier record.
*	An asterisk preceding the common name indicates cases of 'splits' or 'lumps', after recent taxonomic changes.
#	When preceding English name, denotes a species endemic to India.
CD	Conservation Dependent (BirdLife International 2001).
CR	Critical (BirdLife International 2001).
DD	Data Deficient (BirdLife International 2001).
EN	Endangered (BirdLife International 2001).
NT	Near Threatened (BirdLife International 2001).
VU	Vulnerable (BirdLife International 2001).
#	When preceding Scientific name, denotes a globally threatened or near-threatened species (Collar, et al, 1994).

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ADDENDUM

The following extralimital species could also occur in the Indian region (Kazmierczak 2005)

Squacco Heron	<i>Ardeola ralloides</i> Scopoli, 1769
Eurasian Dotterd	<i>Eudromias morinellus</i> Linnaeus, 1758
White-rumped Sandpiper	<i>Calidris fuscicollis</i> Vieillot, 1819
Pectoral Sandpiper	<i>Calidris melanotos</i> Vieillot, 1819
White-throated Robin	<i>Irania gutturalis</i> (Guerin-Meneville, 1843)
Mourning Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe lugens</i> Lichtenstein, 1823
Sillars's Mountain-Finch	<i>Leucosticte stelleri</i> Rossman, 1899
Pink-rumped Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus eos</i> Strassmann, 1930

Cover: Female Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*). This tiny colourful metallic green hummingbird hovers at flowers to sip nectar with its needle-like bill. The wings of the hovering bird make a distinctive whistle. This hummingbird is common in low mountains, lowlands, and along the coasts of Western States of North America. Its call is a very soft 'chew'. During the chase the bird combines high scolds and 'chew' notes. The male has an iridescent violet band at the lower border of its black throat called as gorget.

Photo: S. Srihar, ARPS

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Response to SWOT

Lt. Gen. Baljit Singh agrees that 'pleasant reading' should be a major objective, and questions the inclusion of some articles. My answer is that the Newsletter must also continue to encourage novices, and valuable information (even badly presented) will have to be included. K.S. Lavkumar gives his response in the correspondence column, but as you will see from this issue, I have not followed his advice about not using Editorial space for reporting on my peregrinations. Asad Rahmani is constructively critical about inappropriate headings, non-use of metric measures (I confess I am more at home with Feet, Inches and Pounds rather than Meters, Centimeters and Kilograms). When I was born (19.3.1920) I was told that I weighed 5 pounds. When I grew up my height was 5 feet 10 inches, and my weight for the last 60 years has remained at 130 pounds, with waist at 34 inches. But I will attempt to switch over to modern times. Meanwhile I look forward to more swots (not to its dictionary meaning : Hard study) but your suggestions for improving this publication.

May-June Issue

It was a pleasure to receive this issue and to read the Editorial of the Guest Editor Aasheesh Pittie. A most useful issue, and I hope all contributors will use the suggested nomenclature. I recall Andrew Robertson's letter to me several years ago, about the absurdity of changing goldenbacked woodpecker to flambek. Incidentally, can someone tell me where Andrew Robertson is?

But I hope we are not violating any scientific, or internationally accepted principles by using the lower case for all common names. This is only as a matter of practical convenience.

July-August Issue

You will notice the serial paging in the May/June special issue on Nomenclature. The serial paging is from 1 to 36. To ensure continuity in the annual numbering, please take the trouble of putting the following numbers from 31 to 76 in the May/June issue. The July/August issue will commence from No. 79.

Kihim : 14.3.02 to 27.5.02

While the world was suffering from Global warming when we arrived in Kihim on 14th March, I had to put on a sweater even at midday, and throughout this period a cool sea breeze continued for most of the day from over the ocean in the West towards the East. At about 4 in the morning, while the ocean still retained its daytime heat and the land cooled off, the direction of the breeze changed from East to West.

I have written so often about Kihim that I hesitate to mention its geographical location (and do so only to avoid a swot and a swat from Asad Rahmani). It is the seaside village on the mainland across Bombay harbour south of Bombay, just about 10 kms across the Arabian Sea. For ornithologists it is well known as the place where Salim Ali studied the breeding biology of the baya weaver bird during the monsoon of 1930. I am right perhaps in saying that the paper that he wrote on this subject confirmed

his standing in international scientific circles. The house where he stayed "Latifia", still exists, but threats of modern garish development in its neighbourhood are very disturbing.

The village tank where the baya colony built their nests on a babul tree still survives, and in December 1969, when we invited a few leading lights after the IUCN General Assembly, to visit



Kihim, the visitors were amazed to see over 30 species of water birds in this little tank, (not more than 2 hectares of water spread), including the two species of jacanas, coots, duck, kingfishers, purple and Indian moorhen, a purple heron and many more. I have been attempting to persuade the BNHS and Sanctuary Magazine to recreate this site for its potential as a wonderful historical and ecological treasure, and I hope it will happen. Incidentally, during the visit of the IUCN team, Sir Peter Scott did a painting of the red-whiskered bulbul (perhaps the commonest bird of Kihim) in our Guest Book, and it is reproduced here.

As usual bird watching in Kihim was wonderful. Glorious sights of white-bellied sea eagles, stationary and on the wing, gull-billed terns doing their incredible about-turns in flight and landing unerringly on their prey in the eddying tide, large groups of plovers which I could not always identify, jungle mynas strangely, invariably among the rocks on the beach looking for food, common green bee-eaters on the beach feasting on butterflies, swallows and swifts, sometimes swooping close to the ground around one, quite a thrill.

My daughter, Zahida Whitaker, during her morning 6 a.m. walk, saw a solitary chick of a redwattled lapwing on the beach in mid-May. The parent bird was some distance away being chased by a dog, and the bird was performing the broken wing strategy to lure the dog away from the chick. I hope the chick survived.

The next day a nest of a redwattled lapwing was pointed out to me by a friend. The two eggs and the nest on a rock in a dried tank bed, was so obliterative that I could never have found it myself. I watched it over two days and the parents were not visible. Perhaps the heat was adequate and the birds left the eggs unattended. On the third day there was only one egg. While I was standing near the nest an adult appeared silently some distance away, looked at me, decided that I was harmless, and walked away round the corner. I can only hope that it was attending to the chick from the other egg which, possibly laid a day earlier, enabled the nidifugous chick to walk away. Pure optimistic conjecture. I see that Salim Ali says "incubation period unknown."

The woodland behind the beach, and the adjoining garden areas provided other excitement : a lovely male iora on a tamarind, a young magpie robin on an electric wire with only half a tail (I presumed it was a young bird, for during the following weeks I thought its tail was lengthening), a white-spotted fantail flycatcher frequently seen weaving in and out of a flowering gulmohar, a close view of a yellowthroated sparrow (*Petronia xanthocollis*) on its favourite casuarina branch, redwhiskered bulbuls and spotted doves everywhere, and a fairly good view of a honey buzzard (*Pernis ptilorhynchus*).

The joys of birdwatching is greatly increased if you visit the same area over a period of time and see what changes have taken place. I say this here because Salim Ali had kept a close watch on the honey buzzard and this is what I found from his records: In a note written on 27th May 1943, (almost 60 years ago) he wrote : "A pair of honey buzzards has been nesting between "Yali" and "Retreat" (two houses on the beach with large wooded compounds) for the last 12 years to my knowledge – but never more than one pair. On 10th May, a 14 day old chick from this year's nest in "Retreat" compound was ringed. If it grows up it may furnish some clue as regards the nesting pair next year. Does the same pair nest here year after year ? Is its place taken in part or wholly by the "late born" youngster ? Or do altogether new birds occupy the place, and what happens to the yearly progeny ?" I am afraid these questions have remained unanswered.

There was a surprising number of common grey hornbills around this season. On one occasion a group of six landed on a *Bombax* (simul or red silk cotton tree), and started tugging away at the cotton and flinging it away into the air for pure fun. This is final confirmation that birds enjoy life – sometimes actively.

I cannot end this note without a reference to the menace posed by our crows, house and jungle (or long-billed, the new name), to our beautiful birds, small or large. On several occasions this season I saw teams of crows (25 on one occasion) attacking our majestic w.b. sea eagle. I am so incensed by what I saw, and by what we know is happening, that I appeal to our technocrats to find a humane, but effective way, of reducing our crow population – destroying their nests or by some innovative biological, electronic or mechanical device. If we can go to the moon, we should be able to deal with our crows. If you are hesitant to accept this view, read what Salim Ali said about crows in the *Birds of Kutch* (1935) :

"The numbers everywhere are legion, and the devastation it does to the eggs and young of other birds is appalling. Large rabbles descend upon nest colonies of herons, egrets, spoonbills and other species (e.g. at Devisar Tank near Rudra Mata, and Pharsar Tank, Chaduva) as soon as the owners have moved away at an observer's approach, and reap a rich harvest of the eggs and newly hatched chicks, temporarily left unguarded. The birds alight on the edge of the nest – three to four crows to each – smash the eggs with deliberate hammer blows of their bills and swallow the contents. They are audacious, determined and absolutely without shame, and carry on their nefarious operations – tearing asunder helpless hatchlings and swallowing them like oysters, with studied callousness. Sometimes they do this under the very bill of the outraged parent, calmly hopping clear of an innocuous jab and completely engrossed in the work of demolition. There is no doubt that the house crow is the most destructive single agency at work against the general bird-life of Kutch, and calls for prompt and drastic measures of suppression. The crow must die if other interesting species are to live. They are also destructive to jowar and bajra crops. Parties are commonly seen clinging to the stems and pecking at the grain on the cob, sometimes wrenching off the complete spike and flying off with it to devour at leisure." Your comments, for and against the crow, would be welcome.



Fire Brigade to the Rescue of Grey Herons

Dr. SATISH A. PANDE, ELA Foundation, C-9, Bhosale Park, Sahakarnagar-2, Pune 411 009

On the eve of 8th April 2002, a hailstorm unleashed its fury on the village of Dalaj No. 2, near Bhaigwan (18° 04'N, 75° 07'E) Tal. Indapur on the Pune-Solapur highway, about 125 km. from Pune. On the tall trees in the New English School campus of Dalaj is the nesting colony of grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*). On this day around 60 active nests of grey herons were present, mainly on Eucalyptus spp., Subabhoor (*Leucena leucocephala*) and Gulmohar (*Delonix regia*) trees. A few nests were seen on the two smaller *ficus benghalensis* trees also. The several Eucalyptus and Subabhoor trees were planted in the compound in the routine plantation programmes. The grey herons had first nested here in the previous year with success, when 15 nests were recorded. This year a four-fold increase was noticed. This was thus a new colony. So far grey herons were known to nest in the traditional mixed heronry at Indapur, on tamarind trees with openbill and painted storks and glossy ibises. The grey herons there were fewer than 10 pairs. At Dalaj, however, there were only grey herons and no other birds, it was thus a pure type of heronry, 3 chicks per nest. The heronry is about 500 m from the Bhima river, which is rich in fish.

On the evening of the hailstorm, out of the 60 active nests of grey herons, 30 were damaged. A few Subabhoor trees were uprooted and broken. The nests were either hurled to the ground or were squashed with the chicks. Two sacks full of nesting material lay on the ground with 40 dead chicks and broken eggshells. Some grey herons were found dead on the trees with their legs or necks entangled in the broken branches. Dogs and crows fed on the dead birds, while brahmny kites were predating the unattended nests.

In this catastrophe 5 live chicks were rescued and fed by the local villagers and school teachers. Two volunteers guarded them throughout the night till they were handed over to the forest department officials the next day. The various causes of death of the grey herons can be summarized as:- a) Fall from a height, b) Trauma due to whiplashing of the branches, c) Injury due to the hailstorm, d) Shock, and e) entanglement of neck and other parts in branches. A few nests with chicks were found dangling precariously on the broken branches. This news was published in the Marathi newspaper 'Sakal'. Mr. Dhyaneswar Rayate told me about the incident the same night on the phone.

The next day Mr. Amit Pawashe, a keen birdwatcher, visited the heronry at my request and took photographs. Amit taught the forest guards how to feed the chicks and to administer vitamin drops to them. Several grey herons were seen to shift to Bhavaninagar on the banks of Bhima, which is about 30 km from Dalaj. They started building new nests on the few tamarind trees there.

Two days later I received a phone call from Mr. Rayate. He had noticed that a chick or two had fallen from the broken trees and he could count 13 grey heron juveniles, which were obviously not in their nests. They were starved and unable to fly. Some chicks were attended by parents but were weak. It is important to note an interesting point here. Grey herons feed their chicks by regurgitating food in the nest platform. If the nest is broken and the platform floor is not intact the regurgitated food spills on

the ground and the chicks remain starved even though their parents are present. During this period the day temperature was 40°C. This led to dehydration and all attempts to rescue them from the fragile branches of the eucalyptus and Subabhoor trees were unsuccessful. The chicks would have certainly died if they were left alone.

I called up the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) Fire Brigade office and spoke to Mr. L.N. Raut, Chief Fire Officer. We asked for his help to take the fire engine to Dalaj, 125 km away from Pune, outside their jurisdiction. No other fire engine was available with tall ladders. Mr. Raut kindly consented and we were supposed to pay the diesel charges for the fire-engine journey since this was outside their jurisdiction, to which we gladly agreed. What we would be achieving would be priceless. Dr. Ramesh Godbole of Nisarg Sewak, myself, Chandrahas Kolhatkar and Amit Pawashe of ELA Foundation, along with firemen travelled to Dalaj in the fire engine. This 125 km journey was memorable since the siren of the engine was blowing and the journey was backbreaking. It was a childhood dream fulfilled! Travelling in the fire engine itself and that too with firemen and for 3 full hours; We were on a mission to rescue the orphaned, hungry chicks of grey herons. The ill luck that had befallen them was partly due to human beings.

We human beings have been felling large strong trees and have been planting fragile, tall, fast growing trees instead. Eucalyptus and Subabhoor have been our favourites. Big strong trees not being available, the herons and storks are left with the only option of these fragile tall trees. These trees are unable to withstand storms which the tamarind and ficus trees do easily. Hence when the nests on Eucalyptus and Subabhoor at Dalaj were destroyed on a large scale, the nests at Indapur that were on tamarind trees were undamaged. This was a clear case of human intervention caused by large scale felling of native trees, thus adversely affecting the nesting cycle of grey herons. The human lust for wood had cost the grey herons dearly. They had to pay with their lives. We had a moral duty to help the survivors.

In a unique operation that lasted over an hour and a half, firemen rescued 13 grey heron juveniles stranded high up on the branches of Subabhoor and gulmohar, with the help of their long ladders. In an unusual way, firemen helped in extinguishing the 'fire' that was burning in the stomachs of the hungry grey herons. We immediately gave the rescued herons glucose water, steroids and dry fish. The villagers were very cooperative and so were the school teachers and students. The school had closed for the holidays on that very day. An examination of the herons revealed the following injuries:- Corneal opacity, keyhole iris due to injury to the iris, blindness in one eye and minor abrasions to several birds. The injured birds were given antibiotics brought by Mr. Mahavir Elure, who owns a chemist shop. After this the herons were handed over to the forest officials under the guidance of RFO Mr. Jehangir Shaikh. In four weeks all the chicks had grown well. They were fed fresh fish and were given multivitamin ABDEC drops.

We approached Mr. J.C. Daniel, Hon. Secretary, BNHS, for permission to ring the grey herons before their release. Mr. Daniel immediately provided us with the K-size rings and gave us the necessary permission. We also got permission from the CF Pune, Mr. A.K. Nigam, who spoke to the CCF Nagpur. We went to Mumbai for the rings and then proceeded to Bhigwan (18° 04' N, 75° 07' E) and then ringed 16 grey herons *Ardea cinerea* on 9th May 2002. Ringing was done in the presence of forest department staff, local people and local birdwatchers like Mr. Bharat Mallav, Satish Kate, Dhyaneswar Rayate, who had come from Baramati. Everyone showed tremendous interest in bird ringing and asked questions which we tried to answer. Then over the next 3 weeks all the herons were successfully released. They flew on strong wings and even the heron with one eye flew away to freedom. In all 16 herons were reared, ringed and released.

In the first week of May 2002, in another heat wave, when the temperature soared to 42°C, 60 grey heron juveniles fell on the tar road from their nests in another roadside heronry at Pedgaon and died. The water level in the Bhima River had receded and there was an extreme scarcity of fish. After the news of the death of the herons was flashed in the newspapers, water was released in the River. Pedgaon is 30 km from Dalaj, in Tal. Shrigonda, on the banks of Bhima River. Here too it was the second year of their nesting. Some live grey herons were also rescued by the 'Nature Conservation Society' of Shrigonda by active members, Mr. Arif Shaikh, Dr. D.K. Mhaske, Dr. A.B. Gore and Sunil Shinde. Some birds were released on the bank of the adjacent Bhima River but since they were unable to fly they died. We found their feathers and bones in a sugarcane field. Jackals, foxes or stray dogs must have eaten them.

Later, we had a telephonic conversation and when more herons which kept falling down were rescued, they were taken to the Ahmadnagar (19° 05' N, 74° 48' E) forest department nursery, which is 80 kms from Pedgaon. Mr. Milind Bendale, reporter 'Sakal' newspaper, and Dr. Sudhakar Kurhade, Hon. Wildlife Warden, did this important task, with the help of Mr. S.B. Shelke, DCF and M.P. Bhavsar, RFO Ahmadnagar. There the herons were nursed and reared with fresh fish and multivitamin drops for 4 weeks. We again requested Mr. Daniel for extra rings. We went to Ahmadnagar in the car of a nature enthusiast dentist Dr. Mohan Panse, from Pune and travelled 110 km on 4th June 2002. We ringed 8 herons and then brought them in the forest department vehicle to Pedgaon (80 km) and then released 4 birds. The others which could not yet fly were kept for a day at Pedgaon, and the next day were shifted back to Ahmadnagar. They were also released later.

During the release of the rescued grey herons a small function was held at Pedgaon in the compound of a school. Villagers

enthusiastically attended it. On a banner was written in bold letters a legend 'Home coming of the rescued grey herons and their release to freedom'. My eyes were wet; the love and emotions that the legend carried could move anyone's soul. The grey herons were accorded human dignity. We and the forest officials were felicitated for our role in the help given to them. There were small speeches on the importance of large trees and the role of birds in nature. It was agreed to plant large trees immediately. These people in the remote villages were actively involved in saving and helping the herons and in tolerating the heronries on their private lands. Mr. Arik Shaikh and Mr. Bendale informed me of the several other heronries in the vicinity of Shrigonda and Pedgaon.

The entire episode of the destruction of grey herons, first in the hailstorm and then due to the heat wave and food scarcity; of the rescue of the juveniles with the help of the Fire Brigade; of their successful nursing, ringing and release to freedom; of the cooperative interaction of the NGO's, forest department, BNHS; of the participation of local villagers and their active role in conservation; were given wide publicity by all the newspapers in English and Marathi. The episode of the unusual rescue by us with the help of the Fire Brigade, was shown on the national 'E' – TV network, since we had filmed the entire story. This helped in creating further awareness especially in the remote villages.

I am still receiving phone calls from remote villages from local lads, telling me that they are helping and feeding juvenile herons which still fall from the nests. They ask for advice on the phone. Well, this answers an important question, which the Fire Brigade man had asked me on our way to Dalaj. He had asked "We are travelling 250 km from Pune to Dalaj to save just a few herons. What will it achieve apart from the life of these few birds?" The answers is slowly trickling through. Our action had prompted many villagers, students and others to actively help the birds and animals on their own. They understood the importance of humanitarian help accorded even to smaller creatures. This would encourage others to actively help and not be mere spectators. The Fire Brigade rescue operation was a good beginning.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to Mr. Dhyaneswar Rayate, Milind Bendale, Arif Shaikh and the members of 'Nature Conservation Society' of Shrigonda for their help. We wish to thank the Pune Municipal Corporation Fire Brigade and Chief Fire Officer, Mr. L.N. Raut, for their active help. We are also grateful to Dr. Ramesh Godbole of 'Nisarg Sewak' for bearing the charges of the Fire Brigade in the rescue operation, and for giving 'ELA Foundation' an opportunity to show in a public function, on the occasion of the anniversary of their NGO, the film on this issue prepared by us, to a large audience in Pune.



The room in my hostel not only had one of the most uninspiring views, but also an equally unenviable location. The window of the room opened directly in front of the hostel kitchen's exhaust. Each morning, I woke up to the rumbling sound of the exhaust. The strong smell of spices being fried could wake up even the

soundest of sleepers. This made getting up in the morning a rather unpleasant experience. However, the saving grace of the room was a small babul tree (*Acacia nilotica*). Babul, a moderately sized tree with a short thick cylindrical trunk, is not the most elegant of trees, but is capable of growing on rocky

Morning Ragas

ASEEM TRIPATHI, Research Scholar, Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

terrain, and weathering hot temperatures. The babul tree accounts for a major part of the open scrubland foliage that constitutes our campus. This particular tree grew exactly in front of the kitchen wall on which there was the exhaust. Despite its awkward location the tree was very popular with birds. Various species of birds used to flock to its branches. Early in the morning we could get to see bulbuls (redvented, whitecheeked and redwhiskered), mynas (common Indian and brahminy), babblers, sparrows, robins, etc. The tree was especially popular with redwhiskered bulbuls (*Pycnonotus jocosus*). These bulbuls had a rather snobbish attitude, and seemed particularly possessive about the tree, unwilling to share it with other birds while they perched on it. This was unlike its whitecheeked cousins (*Pycnonotus leucogenys*), another regular visitor to the babul tree, who made friends with everyone.

Just beneath the babul tree, there was a small open drain. An overflowing overhead tank ensured that the drain remained perpetually full of water. A couple of magpie robins (*Copsychus saularis*) and the Indian robin (*Saxicoloides fulicata*), could be seen probing near the drain looking for food. Sometimes, a brown rock chat (*Cercomela fusca*) could also be seen near the tree. Though it never perched on the tree, it could be seen pecking on the walls near the tree. One rather surprising observation regarding the birds that visited the babul tree was that, barring the babblers which occasionally broke into an animated discourse with one another, the other birds mostly preferred to remain silent. The usual energetic chirping of the birds was replaced by rather subdued calling.

All this changed. One morning I discovered that the tree had been cut down. What remained was a mere stub of the erstwhile babul tree. The awkward location of the tree proved to be its nemesis. With the tree gone the birds also stopped coming, and the only attraction of the room was lost. It was time that I looked for an alternative accommodation. However, I would remember the tree for a long time for it was while watching birds perched on its branches that my ornithological interests reached maturity.

My present accommodation in the hostel has a more benign setting. It faces the courtyard on one side, while it overlooks a vast open space on the other side. In the courtyard there are three Neem trees (*Azadirachta indica*), a tall Safeda or Himalayan poplar tree (*Populus ciliata*), and a huge Pipal tree (*Ficus religiosa*). While on the other side of the room from the window we can see a red silk cotton (*Bombax ceiba*), a bakain or Persian lilac tree (*Melia azedarach*), an Amaltas or Indian Laburnum (*Cassia fistula*), and a neem tree. However, it is in the courtyard where all the activity takes place. I no longer have to wake up in the morning to the rumbling noise of the kitchen exhaust, instead the first sounds I get to hear early in the morning are those made by a pair of blue rock pigeons (*Columba livia*). A pair of these birds comes and sits early in the morning on the windowsill, and let out the familiar deep-throated "gooter-go" sound. By the time the morning sunlight reaches the courtyard frantic activity begins there. Bulbuls, mynas, babblers, sparrows, pigeons, parakeets, crows, all come flocking to the courtyard. The whole courtyard and its surroundings reverberate with the calls of these birds.

It sounds as if some celestial spirits are playing some ethereal raga, only to be appreciated and understood by those who seek to understand it; to others it is a mere cacophony. The house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) are the most vociferous, and the busiest of the birds to be seen in the courtyard. The sparrows in large numbers have made their nests in between the gaps, which have been provided between two building blocks to safeguard against any earthquakes. Due to their vulnerable position, the sparrows of our courtyard become easy prey for the shikra (*Accipiter badius*). A solitary shikra can often be seen in the courtyard during the morning when the bird activity is at its peak, providing it with an opportunity to hunt. On one such occasion I saw a shikra catch a sparrow. The shikra, which was perched on the pipal tree, remained absolutely motionless as it observed its prey. Seizing an opportunity, it caught an unsuspecting sparrow while it was in flight. The dexterity with which it caught was astonishing.

Amidst the sounds that emanate from the courtyard, one of the most conspicuous is the one made by the Tickell's flowerpecker (*Dicaeum erythrorhynchos*). Though the bird is somewhat difficult to spot in the thick foliage, its characteristic incessant "chick-chick" notes in the background act as the base to the calls of other birds. Much like the notes of the tanpura (a four stringed accompanying instrument used in Hindustani classical music). The three notes – the lower, the middle, and the higher are repeatedly played, and act as the guide notes for the raga. As the month of February sets in one can get to see a few rufous backed shrikes (*Lanius schach*), with a mask like black band over its forehead and eyes. It looks like a bird that is dressed up as a pirate for a fancy dress party. Its harsh, scolding calls go very well with its appearance. Another regular visitor to the courtyard is a lone tree pie (*Dendrocitta vagabunda*). It can regularly be seen pecking at a huge abandoned beehive on the pipal tree. The tree pie while it is in the courtyard, makes sure that you get to hear its complete repertoire of its large variety of calls, from the melodious to the acrimonious. The last to put up a performance are a bunch of roseringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*). Their loud and sharp screaming calls take the bird song in the courtyard to a crescendo, ensuring that the morning performance culminates in a grand finale.

By the time it is late morning and when human activity picks up around the courtyard, a complete lull descends on it, barring the calls of the house crow (*Corvus splendens*) the only bird which can confront humanity with confidence.

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First New Experience of the 21st Century

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It is a fifteen year old patch of afforestation; a one thirty by ninety yards rectangle. There are more than thirty old and gaunt saal trees (*Shorea robusta*) surrounded by the mono-culture plantation of gamhaar trees (*Gmelina arborea*) numbering close to four digits. Three sides are bordered by bakayan trees (*Melia azedarach*) in a neat single windbreaker row and the fourth side rests on the crest of a steep mud cliff. It was a showpiece afforestation "demonstration" patch at one time but as of now it is a depressing reminder of the many miscued dreams of the 20th Century blown midstream. Despite the ravaged and sorrowful looks of the plantation, the old saal trees still attract several species of birds, some residents and others local migrants. Nearby are patches of cultivation so small that for someone who spent his childhood in the Punjab, they look smaller than urban kitchen garden vegetable patches. Nevertheless, they are the very basis of subsistence of a few Adivasi hamlets.

Over the last three years, between the months of Aug. and Oct, I have often encountered two shikras, possibly a pair (?), in and around this stand of trees. On 25th Jan. of the 21st century with an itch to use a pair of newly acquired high-tech binoculars, I went out for the morning walk towards this plantation. There was a light mist which moulded the sharp definition of twigs, leaves and birds into velvet smooth fuzziness; lending a certain aesthetic appeal certainly but irritating when you were onto obtaining a critical observation to bird identification and behaviour.

I did not see it take off, but a bird in a smooth glide entered my vision and alighted on a nearby tree. I gathered it in my binoculars, perched facing away, my heart pounding in anticipation of a vision of a shikra. Instead, it was a times ten magnified image of a common hawk-cuckoo shrouded in winter's veil. The bars on his tail were at once eye catching.

The cuckoo was obviously on a quest for food. Without so much as a flutter of a wing, it glided again, smooth and silent and touched down softly at the roots of a saal tree. What it picked up, I have no idea but it did and was gone in a trice. I walked up to the tree but there were no clues at all.

It was at this juncture that the tinkling of bells of buffaloes grazing on paddy stubble in harvested fields drew my attention. Walking in and out of their legs were two cattle egrets. All of a sudden one egret darted forwards and then flew towards me. Alighted on a narrow mud ridge covered by grass, lowering its neck, rapidly moving its head from side to side, it jabbed its beak into the grass and appeared grappling with something between his beak. All these activities were executed in one, smooth and swift action. When it lifted its neck, it was holding a dark grey-brown lizard, (about six inches long from its snout to the tip of

its tail), precisely from its middle as I noticed it dangle in two equal halves on either side of its beak. The lizard was frantically trying to get free, flailing its long tail in an effort, I think to throw the egret off balance. At the same time, the lizard kept its jaws wide open, the flesh of its mouth looking a menacing pink, it tried to lift and turn its upper trunk to perhaps bite at the neck of the egret or to convey some such threat. The four legs and claws of the lizard, two each dangling from either side of the beak of the egret, were stretched out, the claws closing and opening constantly perhaps in an effort to get a grip somewhere. Whether by design or chance, the body of the lizard was held from the top of the spine thus neutralizing all normal physical functions of the lizard's limbs. On the other hand, all these may have been the involuntary body constrictions of the lizard because of the compression applied by the egret's beak.

My bird reference book confirmed that lizards do form the diet of cattle egrets but all books are silent on how they kill or immobilize the lizard before consuming them as food. This is the first time that I saw a cattle egret with a live lizard and anytime I see the bird henceforth I am sure to be gnawed by anxiety to see how the egret would apply *coup de grace*. So I already have one intriguing purpose to journey into the 21st Century!

Postscript

Barely ten months into the 21st century, at 8 a.m. on 6 Nov. 2000, I was afforded a live show how an egret makes a meal of a frog. On a fallow field bordering rice-paddy I spotted a median egret with something dangling from his beak. As I was looking into the sun, the binocular vision was impaired but clear enough to see that the egret held a fairly large frog in his beak, from close to one of the frog's hind legs. There was a trace of struggle but obviously the frog was exhausted at this stage. Taking a few steps, the egret lowered its neck, deposited the frog close ahead of its feet and began jabbing at the belly of the frog vigorously with its beak. I could not see whether feet were used to anchor the frog down. After a minute or so, it lifted the mauled frog and dropping it began jabbing again. Another minute perhaps, the egret had severed one leg of the frog and lifting its neck swallowed it fairly fast. Back to jabbing and when at last it now lifted the frog, it looked punctured and shredded. It made an attempt to swallow the whole but then hesitated. Seconds later, it straightened its body and in one effort swallowed the frog. And then stretched its neck and beak straight and heavenwards as though letting gravity help slide the morsel down the gullet. There was no bulging or bloating of the neck even though it was a sizeable morsel. I was sorry for the frog but felt satisfaction at having gained knowledge in the field at first hand.

REVIEW

PAKHIYANJIEU PIROLIEUN By TEJPAL DHARAMSI SHAH.
Book Review by Arun Bhatia

An introduction to birds of Kutch in Kutchhi language, Pakhiyanjieu Pirolieun translates to "two-liner poems about birds". In hardback and of 365 pages with pictures, it is unique as it is in Kutchhi, a local dialect that does not have a script and thus uses the Gujarathi script.

The book covers 316 birds of Kutch observed personally by the author Tejpal Dharamsi Shah, an established poet going under the name "Tej". The birdman poet has written a poem on every species, to summarize its features and then gives meticulous notes on colours of plumage, bills, legs etc., and gives bird behaviour and habitat features. Also as a first attempt of its kind, he gives the names of birds in Kutchhi.

Thus, one finds that the Indian peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*) known in Gujarathi/Hindi as "mor" is "karayal" in Kutchhi, and beside the pithy two liner poem, there is local information including that of a village called Sandhav (Abdasa District) which alone boasts of five hundred peacocks.

Maharaj Kumar Himmatsinhji, to whom the book is dedicated states in his foreword "this unique piece of literature combining bird lore with Kutchhi poetry and prose" has some species that he has himself not seen in the half century that he has studied birds. Pictures were made available for this unique book by the Bombay Natural History Society and beside the 347 pages covering the birds, there is a glossary of updated English and scientific names.

It is a heartening addition to bird information and addresses target audience that matters in our predominantly rural land.

CORRESPONDENCE

COMMENTS ON NEWSLETTER VOL.42,NO.2. Lavkumar, Hinglaj Baug, Vashistha, Himachal Pradesh 175 103

What on earth are you going around endangering your precious self? Perhaps in SWOT under T should be "The Editor taking long motor journeys". Let me take a swot at the NL - the Editorial should never be longer than one full column. The delightful account of the visit to Mysore, Wynad and the accident should have appeared as a separate piece. When bemoaning limitations of space, the editorials must be just that and nothing more. The Editor cannot encroach on "our" space.

The cover illustration of the American bird is almost of a surrealistic quality, but can we please restrict space to our birds only? On page 20, I was confounded with the heading "A Preliminary Report on the Indian crested peafowl". I hope the name is not a new one, or is there another peafowl?

The heading of the otherwise well written and interesting article on whitebellied sea eagles in Konkan, is misleading. Why the word "Alternate"? This censusing of nesting pairs of eagles is

extremely worthwhile. Great updrafts of enthusiasm for members of the 'Sahyadri Nisarga Mitra'.

I have great memories of Guhagar where I had been with Prakash Gole of Pune on a Nature Camp. The sea eagles too are very special to me since I have the distinction of being the first to photograph a pair on an area off the oyster rock lighthouse island at Karwar. It is heartening to read so many pairs are breeding.

In the article on skimmers (page 27) what does " $(\chi^2=5, df=1, p 0.05)$ " mean? In the list of Kanha birds, page 24, listed is orangeheaded pied ground thrush: This list is quite obviously incomplete since a number of otherwise expected common birds are missing. Perhaps the list given is of birds seen by Tahmina Shafiq and though it is impressive it is her personal list. For instance, all the leaf warblers, several pipits and all the larks are missing; In the "checklist" around Jodhpur, the bluetailed bee-eater "C" needs a second evaluation, and Anil Kumar should please recheck on his green munia. In both "checklists" no indication is given of their status as resident, winter visitor, monsoon visitor, passage migrant. This list too is a personal list and not a "checklist".

These criticisms should however, not deter enthusiasts to write, to prepare lists, and above all to share their joys with others. So to end on a happy note, outside my window is a cherry tree with fruits and I have a delightful assortment of birds coming to pilfer the fruit - yellowbilled blue magpies, black bulbuls, white-eared bulbuls (Himalayan bulbuls), jungle mynas, and blackheaded jays and others.

THE YELLOWTHROATED BULBUL (*Pycnonotus xantholaemus*). Howard Horvath, 1022 A NW Lexington, Bend, Or 97701, USA

I have been travelling in Southern India for the past 2 months on a birdwatching trip. While visiting Hampi (Karnataka) I saw the yellowthroated bulbul (*Pycnonotus xantholaemus*). From the information I have, I understand this is a rare little known species.

On Feb. 15th I arrived in Hampi late in the afternoon. The next morning I was out early to see what birds I could spot. Around mid-day I was walking the path from Hampi bazaar to Kodandarama temple. The path goes under some large boulders (much like a cave). When I came out into the daylight I saw a bird sitting on a boulder below me at a distance of 10 to 15 meters. It was the general size and shape of a white-browed bulbul (*Pycnonotus luteolus*). The bird had a rounded yellow-green head with a black beak, a bright yellow throat, the underparts varied from light grey on the chest to whitish grey on the belly. Since it was below me I could not see the vent. (On subsequent sightings I did observe a yellow vent on birds with the above field marks). When it turned to fly away I saw a bright yellow terminal band on its tail. I heard a bulbul like bubbling similar to call of white-browed or redvented bulbuls (*Pycnonotus cafer*).

I stayed in Hampi till the evening of Feb. 22nd. On each day I had at least one sighting of a yellow-throated bulbul, both individual and in pairs. All sightings were in one area on boulders and/or through scrub. This area is bounded by the Tungabi river, a path from the Kodandarama temple through Sule bazaar to the

Achyutaraya temple, a path from the latter temple over a ridge back to Hampi bazaar and the ridge itself. Bird sightings were made at various times in the day from early morning to late afternoon.

I had not come to Hampi with any great expectations as a birdwatching site. Rather I had come to visit the ruins of Vijayanagar, it was on the route I was travelling (Molem in Goa to Rollapadu in Andhra Pradesh). Hampi was indeed a very pleasant surprise, both the ruins set in a strange and beautiful landscape and the very good bird life. I saw 78 species while I was there. I would highly recommend Hampi as a place to visit. If there is any additional information I can provide, please contact me.

Lastly I would like some assistance with a sighting I had on my last afternoon. I was sitting in the shade of some boulders near the crest of the trail from Achyutaraya temple to Hampi bazaar when I spotted a bulbul with a bright yellow head and throat and a black line running from a black beak to a red eye. The rest of the body was like that of a yellow-throated bulbul except there was no yellow terminal band on the tail. I was unable to see the vent. Is this a variant of the yellow-throated bulbul? Please let me know if you have any information.

VISIT TO 'KAIKONDRAHALLY' TANK ON SARJAPURA ROAD

Motty J. Mathew, A 16 / 19 East, Trinity Acres, Sarjapura Road, Koramangala, Bangalore 560 034

As per the suggestions of the Editor I've been regularly visiting the 'Kaikondrahally' tank from Feb 22nd to May 22nd on Sarjapura road. The area is about 25 acres (approx.) and the depth is very shallow max. 10-12 feet. As the water level receded, the bird population also reduced during peak summer. Most of the birds identified were with Mr. Howard Horvath who had come and stayed with me in Bangalore on his way to the Andamans. Since I started birdwatching only from October, he was of immense help and he is my first guru in the field of birdwatching. Mr. Howard came to know about the 'Home Stay Accommodation' at Thattekkad from the Newsletter For Birdwatchers and I was glad to have him with me for some time.

The interesting birds seen were Indian cormorants (*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*), coot (*Fulica atra*), pied kingfisher (*Ceryle rudis*), pheasant tailed jacana (*Hydrophasianus chirurgus*), marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), little grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*), lesser whistling teal (*Dendrocygna javanica*), cotton teal (*Nettapus coromandelianus*), river tern (*Sterna aurantia*), common hawk cuckoo (*Cuculus varius*), bronzewing jacana (*Metopidius indicus*), pied bushchat (*Saxicola caprata*).

BIRDS ON SMALL ISLANDS IN THE DRAIN ALONG G T KARNAL ROAD. J.L. Singh, D3/1, Rites Flats, Ashok Vihar (Phase 3), New Delhi 110 052

If you enter Delhi by road along the GT Karnal Road, you will notice a drain on your left for about 3 kilometers before you cross the outer ring road. The GT Karnal road is on an embankment about 10-15 feet above the level of the drain and about 15-20 meters from it. The drain itself is about 40-50 meters wide with

brackish water with obvious contamination by chemicals, plastic bags, rags, etc. Unfortunately, the area is used as an open-air lavatory also.

I had noted while driving along the road that there were a number of small islands in the middle of the drain where movement indicated the presence of birds. Therefore, on the 22nd October this year, I decided to explore and see if I found anything interesting. Stopped at two different points. The first point had a couple of islands in the middle but was by and large open. The second spot had a string of acacia trees between the road and the drain and the drain itself was overgrown with reeds.

At the first point, the most visible bird was the black-winged stilt. There were 3 towards the right from where I sat and watched. Unlike other birds, the 3 continued to feed in one place only for at least an hour that I was there. One male and 2 females. Other birds kept coming into view intermittently. Among them a wood sandpiper on the island in front. On the same island, a pied wagtail. A little later, four of these latter birds came and sat on the island together. Calling incessantly the second time round. The ubiquitous blue rock pigeons were never missing for too long. Not as common but reasonably so were ring doves. It was not surprising seeing common crows as there are houses across the drain. An occasional white-breasted kingfisher was visible on the power lines that ran overhead. Dabchicks were also fairly common.

Right in front of me I was able to see a paddy bird swallow a small fish. When I first saw it, it had the fish in its beak. Interestingly, it dropped the fish on the ground a couple of times, re-caught it and finally managed to swallow it on the third try. On an island towards the left, saw some red-wattled lapwings. Found a number sitting down. They were obviously resting as they could not be nesting at this time.

The migratory wagtails had arrived as I saw a white wagtail. It was feeding on the ground close to a common sandpiper. Later, at the second location, saw a yellow-head wagtail also. At this time, the latter's head was not fully yellow but the yellow supercilium was clear.

The second location had a lot of reeds and water hyacinth. The first bird that I saw was a white-breasted waterhen. There were quite a few of which at least one was immature. The waterhens obviously nest here. A largish wader was feeding in this area. A closer look left no doubt that it was a redshank. The white rump, the white trailing edge of the wings along with the red legs left no doubt of its identity. Cattle egrets were present here though not at the first location. Another bird was a common cormorant. Pied and bank mynas made up the list of birds seen, not to mention pariah kites flying overhead.

I have deliberately left two sightings at the first location for the end as they were the most interesting. Hawking insects over the water were half a dozen swallows, which I was able to identify as wire-tailed swallows. Mingling among them were a dozen smaller birds that were certainly swallows or martins. At this location, a part of the drain's bank had caved in, leaving a finger of the drain jutting into the area between the drain and the road. The walls of the finger were fairly vertical and consisted of what looked like a mixture of sand and clay. The smaller swallows were flying through this finger regularly. On closer look, I noted

that there were three one and a half to two inch wide holes in the vertical bank on one side of the finger and two holes on the opposite wall. The birds were coming and sitting at this opening every now and then. I hung around for half an hour but did not see a bird entering the hole. Got the impression that the birds were wary of me. I measured two of the holes that I could reach. One was 6" and the other 9" deep.

Fortunately, I was able to have a good look at the birds. I had not seen them before, but they were obviously martins. Going through the Handbook later, I was able to confirm that these birds were Indian greythroated sand martins (*Riparia paludicola*) now renamed plain martin. The chin and lower breast were smoky grey as the book says and there was no indication of a collar. A confirmation of the species was that they were already nesting. The Handbook says that the collared sand martin nests from November to May, while the greythroated nests from October to February. My sighting being on the 22nd of October would indicate the birds to be the greythroated.

A footnote in the Handbook states that the status of sand martins needs clearing up due to the superficial similarity of the two species. So, at the next opportunity on the 29th of October, I went back to the site to have another look. To my horror, I found that in the intervening week, the concerned maintenance department had repaired the caved in part of the drain by digging out some of the caved in mud and throwing in some sandbags to prevent more caving in. While they were doing a good job of saving the bank, it meant that the nesting had stopped. However, the birds were still flying around the area and luckily, I saw a number sitting on the power lines that stretch overhead. A good look confirmed the lack of a collar, so that I am sure that this was the greythroated sand martin.

AUDIO CASSETTE TAPE: AN UNUSUAL AVIAN DETERRENT.

Dr. Arunachalam Kumar, P.O.Box 53, Mangalore 575001

We recently stumbled upon an ingeniously innovative local technique that acts as an effective "bird-perch" deterrent. The method, widely prevalent in many parts of rural and urban coastal Karnataka, simply consists of loosely wrapping an unspooled used audio cassette tape over branches of trees. The shimmering lengths of tape, running randomly over the tree and between the extending boughs scares away any bird from finding perch. In fact, one can see such festooned tapes in many open-air eateries or favoured shady spots in Mangalore itself. The effectiveness of the technique can be gauged from the fact that even housewives use the "tape-terrorist" in their porches and front yards to repel pesky avian visitors from their sun drying foodstuff recipes.

How or why the system works is beyond us. In a pilot study, we selected a large gulmohar tree in the city outskirts for observation. The results of the triphasic experiment showed that while 25 birds visited the tree, no one called during the wrap period. After unwrapping we saw 18 birds visit the tree again. The study was done over a period of weeks, at specific periods of the day.

We would like some feedback from readers and ornithologists on how (or why) the tape acts as a deterrent.

Table 1 Without tape

Date	Crows	Sparrows	Drongos	Magpie	Orioles	Pittas	Unknown	Total
21.3	4	4	1	0	0	0	0	9
22.3	4	2	0	0	0	2	0	8
23.3	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Grand Total								25

With Tape

27.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
28.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
29.3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total								0

Without Tape

2.4	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	3
3.4	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
4.4	4	2	0	0	1	1	1	8
Grand Total								18

PART II OF BIRD CALL RECORDINGS BY SURAT NATURE CLUB. *Lavkumar Khacher, 646, Vastunirman, Gandhinagar 382022*

Surat Nature Club has done it again! Part II of bird call recordings brings us sounds of 59 species of Indian Birds. The rendering is delightfully clear and a joy to listen. The cassette is accompanied by an attractively illustrated guide. For me it is a great privilege to know the young team doing such commendable work in Surat. Merely to listen to the Shama and the large racquet tailed drongo, I will have to purchase a cassette player ! I now look forward to a new set of recordings with bird calls generically grouped so that the nuances of songs of closely related species can be made out and how I long to possess recordings of bird orchestras one hears in different habitats ! Listening to the high quality of recording presented in this new cassette makes one confident of such packaged pleasure in the near future. How wonderful it would be to have a Shama waking one up instead of the electronic beeps of the modern day alarms !

DETAILS OF SERVING AS WELL AS RETIRED OFFICERS IN THE ARMED FORCES REQUIRED. *Capt. Rohit Gupta, 370 FD COY, 12 INF BDE, C/o. 56 APO.*

I have been reading the NLBW for more than a year now, and I find your newsletter very stimulating and informative, being a keen birdwatcher myself.

The nature of my profession helps me to a great extent in furthering my interests due to the numerous places in the country that I get to visit and stay. Moreover, these interests have never interfered with my work. Rather, they have been sources of motivation and energy and I can positively say that they have enhanced my senses and mental faculties too.

I am aware that there are more like minded people in the armed forces too and I am keen to know about them for interaction. For this I request the readers of NLBW to kindly send details of serving as well as retired officers in the Armed forces, who are interested in birdwatching.

LARKS, PIPITS AND WOLVES. Prakash Gole, 1/B, Abhimanshree Society, Pune 411008.

Of late I have been going to some of our dry hills – the rainshadow ghat areas that are home to pipits and larks. In olden days we knew only of the Indian pipit, now called paddyfield pipit. But now if you look at them carefully you see a bewildering variety. It is not at all easy to identify them accurately. It is an observational challenge, which makes birdwatching so much fun. Larks are also most interesting with one species, I think it is Indian bush lark, (*Mirafra erythroptera*), regularly going about with a cocked tail, like a magpie robin, or a tailor bird. I don't find this trait mentioned in any of the text books. In these dry areas I regularly come across fourhorned antelopes, jackals and wolves, the encounters making these outings most thrilling.

INCIDENTS OF CROWS ATTACKING HUMANS. B. Vijayaraghavan, G-89, Anna Nagar, Chennai 600102

In vol. 41 (No. 6 Nov.-Dec. 2001) of the Newsletter, the Editor quotes ornithologist Michio Matsudo attributing incidents of crows attacking humans to the failure of the latter to take note of the signals of the crows to keep off their territory. But I do not think the crow deserves to be exonerated so readily.

Crows attacking humans who venture close to their nests is understandable. But what is not so understandable is why this happens when there are no nests in the vicinity and why only particular persons are targeted repeatedly. There was a house crow frequenting the compound of my house that had developed a strange dislike for me for no fault of mine and would dive-bomb me whenever it got a chance. In Kerala, we have a word for it - *Kaakkapaka* (crow's hatred).

While describing the habit of the crow, Salim Ali and Dillon Ripley have this to say in the Handbook: " Besides intelligence and a limited capacity for ratiocination, possesses distinct sense of humour. Revels in puckish antics such as playfully tweaking tails of other birds, or ears of sleeping cow or dog, or toes of flying foxes hanging on their diurnal roosting-trees, with no apparent object other than to enjoy their annoyance and discomfort!". That gives us a better insight into the mind of the crow ! Or, does it?

ODD ENDS TO BIRDS. L. Shyamal, No. 1, 12th B Main, Muthyalanagar, Bangalore 560054

India celebrated 50 years of independence on August 15, 1997. I woke up in my hostel room in the Indian Agricultural Statistics Research Institute, bordering the Pusa Institute parent campus - a little island of peace and greenery amid the haste of New Delhi. But this morning was shattered by shrieks, which turned out to be a pied myna, entangled in kite-string and dangling from a

nearby tree. August is the month of kite flying in Delhi and this one was perhaps celebrated with more enthusiasm than others, for there was a lot of kite-string running about in the trees around. We managed to release the pied myna by burning the threads above the bird with a long stick lighted at its end. This proved to be a good technique and later in the day a house crow was released in no time by the same means. In the weeks that followed I came across two dead house crows and a common myna in the same small area that was a favourite roost for crows and mynas.

Accidents can happen on the ground below too. Looking back, I remember an open rectangular cement lined pit in the Indian Institute of Science campus. It always held a thick green soup of algae and water and more than once yielded a small striped keelback snake that gracefully allowed it to be fished ashore into terra firma and freedom. Birders of those days would never miss a peek into this little pit and that exercise yielded the corpses of no less than three crow pheasants in the span of about five years. My guess is that the crow pheasants hopping through the undergrowth nearby fell into the pit and with wings wet and too little space for take off, tired and drowned. Perhaps these deaths might have been avoided with the trimming of vegetation around the pit.

Many a bird meets its end on our roads. Pariah kites seem to be particularly vulnerable to collisions with traffic thanks to their habit of picking food off the roads. Where electricity and garbage meet, they are also routinely electrocuted. In greener localities low flying koels are often hit by traffic.

In plantation homes in the western ghats many an emerald dove ends dead against glass window panes. In recent times I have seen netting used to prevent fatalities and have heard that another apparently effective method is to mount the glasses at a slight angle so that it reflects the sky or the ground below rather than to appear like a continuation of the surrounding landscape.

Bird saving solutions could cause grief too. The Karnataka Forest Department routinely resorts to the planting of *Acacia nilotica* in the shores of lakes. With its vicious spines and an ability to withstand waterlogging *Acacia nilotica* certainly keeps humans out of the way. In October 1991, I saw a few dead egrets hanging from thorns in the Gudavi Bird sanctuary near Sagar. These were possibly young ones that fell off their nests, but during a mid-winter waterfowl census in January 1995 at Jakkur in Bangalore I saw the impaled remains of adult little egrets at two places and wondered if there might actually be more to this than just a few isolated cases.

Migrants flying into buildings by night seem to be another common cause of injury and death. The first note I wrote to the Newsletter was about a female Indian bluechat that I found dead on my balcony and which I now suspect was the result of flying into a tall water tank. Pittas seem to be peculiarly vulnerable to 'flying-into-terrain' and while I have heard numerous reports, the magnitude of this is quite unknown.

Many such accidents surely go unreported [some exception being Gupta B.K. NLBW 35(5):98 Raptor hits, B.C. Nanda (Lt. Gen. ret'd.), NLBW 36(6): 113 Banded Crake and NLBW 36(5):95 Ruddy Crake] but perhaps we should take more interest

in such reports and seek causes and cures. It would be a pity if it took downed fighter planes to prompt a closer look at bird accidents. [Anish Andheria has written with deep feelings about birds entangled in 'MANJA' covered strings during kite flying sessions - Editor].

A NATURE-LOVER'S UNNECESSARY CONCERN FOR WILDLIFE IN AFGHANISHTAN. Brig. R. Lokaranjan (Retd.), 1-2-593/43-A, Gagan Mahal Colony, Hyderabad 500029

The winter is ending now in Afghanistan. The breeding season begins for some birds there, like the monal (Imperyan pheasant) that inhabit places in the Himalayas also, from Kashmir across Bhutan to the north-east of Assam. I have seen a few in Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Bhutan in the course of my army career. The other day I happened to glance at a photograph taken by me of a pair of monals from a painting done so splendidly by whom I do not know. It was not signed. Seeing it now the picture brings to my mind what human interference in parts of Afghanistan due to US special forces and allied Afghan Forces dealing with several pockets of al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters will cause to wildlife. Devastation quite unintentional to birds and animals will occur in every place where this is happening. The monal will be one of the many birds and animals affected.

The male monal's plumage excels in my opinion even the brilliance and radiance of gemstones, precious and semi-precious which have to be cut and polished to bring out their dazzling appearance. Seeing a male monal in sunlight is overpowering. I could express this by stating rather imaginatively that this sight could turn an atheist to an agnostic ! I will describe this pheasant by some of the words used in K N Dave's book "Birds In Sanskrit Literature" and Dr. Salim Ali's "Indian Hill Birds" suitably extracted by me. The male monal's colouring is a metallic green, copper and purple. Its breast is velvety-black, with the skin in the area around the eye, and cheeks, shades of brilliant ultramarine blue. The crest is a wire-like spread of feathers with a colourful blue-green tuft as it appears to me. It is unlike a peacock's crest. The tail is square-cut, not long like other pheasants, and is of cinnamon chestnut colour. A white patch occurs on its back. The hen monal is an ordinary brown, mottled and streaked dark and pale, and it has a white throat. Its crest is a laid-back few short feathers.

Among the many other birds and animals being disturbed are the chukor and snowcock, animals like urial, marco polo sheep, ibex, bharal, markhor and possibly wild yak. My unnecessary concern is the concern of a nature-lover, taking some interest in wildlife. My fond hope, laughable as it is, is that by some unexplainable, strange or surprising instinct, these fauna will keep out of the way of harm - guns and bombs blasting their natural habitats, whether pastures, or mountainsides or tops. This hope I supplement with some kind of prayer being fully aware that Whatever Will Be, Will Be - "Que Sera Sera!".

TOXIC WASTES EMPTYING INTO HUSSAIN SAGAR IN HYDERABAD. Aasheesh Pittie, 8-2-545 Road No. 7, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad 500034

I would like to add that what Snehal Patel saw around the sewer that flows into the waterbird sanctuary in Porbandar town, is similar

to the situation that prevailed in Hussain Sagar in Hyderabad city till some year ago. A sewer from the industrial belt would empty toxic waste of various forms into the waters of this water body and the number of winter migrants visiting it was phenomenal. Especially shovellers (*Anas clypeata*), Wagtails (*Motacilla* spp.) would throng in the thousands along the margins of the water near where the sewage spread, for mosquitoes bred in the trillions there. Since two years, the inflow of industrial waste from this sewer has been diverted to some other area (alas, the Musi River) and the number of birds has dropped drastically. I have often wondered about the survival of those birds that fed in the noxious waters. What was their survival rate? How many toxins did they ingest? Did they have problems in breeding when they returned? If yes, how are their progeny faring? What is the rate of mortality among these birds? How much did the ingested toxins contribute towards this? Are we seeing the same birds every year?

MIGRATION OF RUFOUSBACKED SHRIKE IN KONKAN.

Rajendra Kokate, Sahyadri Nisarga Mitra, At & Po. Lanja, District Ratnagiri, Maharashtra

The Rufousbacked Shrike *Lanius schach* is a fairly common bird in Konkan. It is often seen uttering its call from the top of a bush. The species does not breed in our area and from May to August the bird migrates to other areas.

From September, 1997 I started to keep records of this shrike. In the first year it was seen in the first week of May. From mid August I kept a watch for it and after a long time on 06-09-1997 in the morning, I saw it for the first time after migration. Next year I failed to note its departure date, but it arrived on 03-09-1998. In 1999 observed it on 12-05-1999, and from 13-05-1999 I did not see the shrike in our area. On 9th September I was travelling for my Election duty and from the bus I saw it calling from a small bush. From the next day, the species was seen everywhere. In the year 2000 again I failed to record its departure but after migration it came back on 9th September, 2000. In 2001 the bird was lastly seen on 26-04-2001 and again from 09-09-2001 after migration.

Table No. 1 Year wise arrival and departure dates of the Shrike.

Year	Last date of presence	First date of arrival
1997	First week of May	06-09-1997
1998	Not recorded	03-09-1998
1999	12-05-1999	09-09-1999
2000	Not recorded	09-09-2000
2001	26-04-2001	09-09-2001

ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET FEEDING ON THE PONGAMIA PINNATA FLOWER. N. Sivakumaran, Hornbill House, BNHS, Mumbai 23

The rose-ringed parakeet *Psittacula krameri* is one of the resident birds in the Indian Subcontinent except in parts of northwest, northeast and Himalayas. It is ubiquitous and vast swarms in

which it occurs in agricultural areas, and its wasteful feeding habits, are a menace to food crops and orchard fruit.

I am working as a Research Assistant in Bombay Natural History Society's Environmental Information System Centre at Mumbai. On the right side of the BNHS's building there is one big *Pongamia pinnata* (L.) tree, which is c. 35 feet high. It is being used by many bird species, Indian koel (*Eudynamys scolopacea*), coppersmith (*Megalaima haemacephala*), rose-ringed parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*), common iora (*Aegithina tiphia*), green bee-eater (*Merops orientalis*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), house crow (*Corvus splendens*), common myna (*Acridotheres tristis*), black drogo (*Dicrurus macrocercus*), etc. for feeding purposes. I used to have a look at the surroundings of the BNHS campus from the terrace. On 15th of April 2001 at 10.17 a.m. I was standing on the BNHS's terrace when I saw 7 rose-ringed parakeets actively feeding on the *Pongamia pinnata* flowers. I observed them from 10.17 a.m. to 10.25 a.m. I went down and on checking found that it feeds on the flower-petals and nectar of *Salmalia malabarica*, *Erythrina indica*, *Butea monosperma*, *Bassia latifolia*, etc. I noticed a number of times that they were feeding till the end of the flowering period.

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RANDOM NOTES. Zaibin AP, Ambalaparambil, PO Irumbuzhi 676 513, Malappuram Dist., Kerala

Beside the road leading to Calicut University campus there are a few *Largerstroemia reginae*. On the sunny afternoon of 16th Nov. 2000 on my way to the campus. I encountered nine cattle egrets *Bulbulcus ibis* on the canopy of these trees. The egrets were foraging from the canopy on the insects attracted to the showy conical bunches of flowers on them. The bird would perch near the inflorescence, seizing insects were buzzing around. Some egrets uttered, "low croaks" while they flew frequently from one branch or tree to another. They remained on these trees for more than an hour foraging in that way.

The Koel (*Eudynamys scolopacea*) usually feeds on fruits and berries; also takes caterpillars, various insects, snails, eggs and small birds and flower nectar (Ali & Ripley, 1983). Besides these items, koels eating flowers of papaya has been reported in the NLBW (Vol. 36; No. 3, 1996).

I could observe a similar instance of koels devouring flowers of *Clitoria ternatea* (Family : Papilionaceae) on 24 Jan. 2001. At 4.30 pm a male koel alighted among creeping tangles and with clumsy hops it leaned to pluck rapidly a mouthful of flowers, then gulped them at once. During this 'feast on flowers' it gaped almost 12 times showing off the blood-red mouth. The bird swallowed many flowers in c. 8 minutes. The Koel gaped and scratched its throat after devouring the flowers apparently due to difficulty in pass them down the food tract.

In the evening of 24 Jan. 2001 a few white-rumped munias *Lonchura striata* were seemed dislodging the leaves of *Glyricidia*

indica (Fam: Papilionaceae) and crushing their petioles while holding in the bill. Were the munias extracting the liquid present in the petiole? Near to them, one adult munia fed two possible young ones.

I happened to see an agitated display of a black-rumped flameback *Dinopium benghalense* towards a common myna *Acridotheres tristis* on 6 March, 2001 at 10.20 am. This was on a horizontal branch of a tree, near the nest hole of the myna.

The woodpecker (female?) with fully extended spotted wings, erected crest and slightly open bill I was seen facing the myna that sat about 15 cm apart. Meanwhile the woodpecker leaned at the myna as if to peck it, but seemed not to have the courage to do so.

NEST OF WHITEBACKED VULTURES IN THE IIM CAMPUS.

Jagdeep S. Chokkar, 405, IIM Campus, Vastrapur, Ahmedabad 380015

I have noticed a nest of whitebacked vultures (*Gyps bengalensis*) on the IIM campus here. There is a colony of about 15 vultures roosting on the same tree.

There used to be a large number of these vultures on this campus till about 2-3 years ago but they seemed to disappear. I believe their disappearance was a widespread phenomenon, more or less nationwide.

BIRD PREDATORS OF CRICKETS DURING A POST-RAIN SWARMING

Dr. M. M. Saxena, Post Graduate Department of Zoology, Govt. College, Dungarpur 314 001, India

Crickets (O. Orthoptera; F. Gryllidae) are potent household and field pests and like other orthopterans are hardy to many pesticides, in general. A massive swarming of cricket fauna was observed on 14.10.2001 following rain at Ajmer (Rajasthan) when their population outburst as a menace in households and around (Temp. 23 to 35°C; RH 65 to 80%). Two gryllid species were recorded namely house cricket *Acheta domestica* and black headed cricket *Gryllodes melanocephalus* of which the former outnumbered (approx. 300:1 respectively).

Birds, which preyed upon this pest, were observed in domestic as well as field conditions. These included Indian robin *Saxicoloides fulicata*, black drongo or king-crow *Dicrurus adsimilis*, common myna *Acridotheres tristis*, bank myna *A. ginginianus*, blackheaded or brahminy myna *Stumus pagodarum*, common babbler *Turdoides caudatus*, redwattled lapwing *Vanellus indicus*, house crow *Corvus splendens*, and house sparrow *Passer domesticus*. The cricket *Gryllodes melanocephalus* was not a preferred meal for most of these birds, perhaps because of its robust appearance and greater chitinization. *Acheta domestica* was eaten up, live as well as dead, by all these birds and mynas and king-crows were observed to be highly active and very swift in picking the meal, often hesitant to even enter the buildings.

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Cover : Gila Woodpecker (*Melanerpes uropygialis*). This zebra striped Woodpecker bores nest holes in giant saguaros as well as cottonwood trees and mesquite. Has a rolling *churr* or loud sharp *yip* call. Also uses its sharp bill to drum a territorial signal to rivals. Gila Woodpecker is a familiar and conspicuous inhabitant of towns, scrub desert and cactus countrysides of Southwestern states of North America.

Photo : S. Sridhar, ARPS

Newsletter for Birdwatchers

Vol. 42 No. 5 Sept.-Oct. 2002



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- ☐ Prof. Satish Dhawan



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Threatened Birds of Asia, CD-ROM

Birdlife International kindly sent me this magical disc, which, incredibly contains all the information within the covers of the two volumes of the Threatened Birds of Asia totaling 3038 pages. Apart from the text it has 400 maps and a black and white illustration of each of the globally endangered species. As I wrote to Mike Crosby of Birdlife International, reviewing this mass of material, so meticulously researched in a way which does it justice, is beyond me, and I am giving here only a brief outline of the information it contains.

Birdlife International now operates in 103 countries, in collaboration with 6 partners in Asia (two more on the way). It has a staff of 4161, a membership of 2,564,808 worldwide, and it owns 1,055,845 hectares of land. Its mission is to conserve birds, their habitats and preserve global diversity.

In passing I might mention that a few years ago when Birdlife International was investigating the prospects of a suitable partner or partners in India, some of us had suggested that it may be advisable to form a Federation of Indian Natural History Societies which would be its Indian partner. This scheme did not materialize and the Bombay Natural History Society is now the anchor of Birdlife International in India. From all accounts the partnership is doing well and we wish it success. Independently of this issue the idea about the Federation should be pursued. Federations are useful institutions for making representations to Government on national problems.

When I opened the disc I was naturally interested in clicking the section relating to India. The threatened species of our country are listed under the standard headings of Critical, Endangered, Vulnerable, Data Deficient and so on. In the Critical list I find the Christian island frigate bird, pinkheaded duck, white-rumped vulture, slender-billed vulture (formerly known as the Himalayan long-billed vulture), forest owl; *Heteroglaux blewitti*, and of course Jerdon's courser; *Rhinoptilus bitorquatus*. (The former generic name was *Cursorius*).

There is extensive information about the populations, geographical distribution, former records and recent records, conservation action suggested and almost everything that an ornithologist would like to know about any threatened species. When I clicked the section of the spotbilled pelican (*Pelecanus philippensis*) I was amazed to see a reference to the solitary bird we had seen floating so impressively on Dodda-Gubbi Lake during the annual meet of our Newsletter on 16.12.1999. Anish Andheria has been credited with this sighting and the source was possibly the article he wrote for the Newsletter for Birdwatchers, published in the Jan/Feb 2000 issue. I was also glad to see references to S. Sridhar and S. Subramanya in relation to these pelicans in Kokrebellur.

For ready reference I reproduce the species on the endangered list. You will remember that the entire list of 76 species under the various categories had been printed earlier in the Newsletter.

White-bellied heron	<i>Ardea insignis</i>
Oriental stork	<i>Ciconia boyciana</i>
Greater adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos dubius</i>
White-headed duck	<i>Oxyura leucocephala</i>
Great indian bustard	<i>Ardeotis nigriceps</i>
Bengal florican	<i>Houbaropsis bengalensis</i>
White-winged duck	<i>Cairina scutulata</i>
Lesser florican	<i>Sypheotides indica</i>
Spotted greenshank	<i>Tringa guttifer</i>
Rufous-breasted	<i>Garrulax cachinnans</i>
laughing thrush	

I suggest that many of you serious ornithologists purchase this CD available at the subsidized price of £12/- from NHBS Ltd., 2-3 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon TQ9 5XN, U.K. It is not a transaction you will regret.

Errata

In Vol. 42 No. 3, May-June 2002 issue, on page number iii sixth line from top, it is printed as : Small Blue Kingfisher. It has to be changed to Oriental dwarf kingfisher.

Prof. Satish Dhawan

Satish Dhawan's death earlier this year saddened everyone who knew him or of him. I saw him a few weeks before he died in Dr. A.R. Pai's Clinic. He looked frail and tired, and it is a mercy that he did not suffer from a long painful illness. He believed in the principle (often quoted by Salim Ali) that man does not live by

bread alone, and here I can do no better than quote K.B. Sanjayan, who is associated with Countdown, the House Journal of the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre :

"Prof. Satish Dhawan (1920-2002), former Chairman, ISRO, who passed away on January 3rd 2002 at Bangalore, was a seasoned birdwatcher. A great variety of birds, both migratory and resident, that frequented Sriharikota Island (SHAR), off the coast of southern Andhra Pradesh in the Bay of Bengal, fascinated him. He studied avian flight in particular and authored Bird Flight, which turned out to be his magnum opus.

Birds such as greater flamingos (*Phoenicopterus roseus*), cattle egrets and painted storks (*Mycteria leucocephala*) attracted him specially and he spent hours observing them at SHAR. He can be rated on par with the leading birdwatchers of India."



Blue Whistling Thrush in Chandigarh

LT. GENERAL BALJIT SINGH, House 219, Sector 16, Chandigarh 160 015

On a misty, bone-chilling January morning in the Chandigarh Rose Garden (Lat. 30° 45' Long 70° 45' AMSL 360 M), there was no mistaking the rasping, clipped bird call "Kree" and repeated twice more at brief intervals. I froze in the hope that the bird might show up. Instead and luckily, the bird embarked on his song but for some instinct called off abruptly. Anyhow I was reasonably sure by now of the presence of the blue whistling thrush. *Myiophonus caeruleus*. But at Chandigarh? In the plains of NW India?

The bird call put me on the fast-reverse memory mode. From 1964 to 1971 my wife and I had an unbroken spell of four to six week trekking at high altitudes in the Himalayas, each year. The first few days as also the last few were invariably passed in the habitat loved by the blue whistling thrush; boulder strewn streams, thickly wooded gorges and steep ravines. These spots were also our favourite night halts. The whistling thrush was always there, hopping over boulders or sprinting on the grassy patches by the banks of the stream in search of tit bits. But when contented, almost always he perched on a big boulder mid-stream, its surface glassed under a thin sheet of flowing water. And that was the setting which always inspired the bird to pour out his long, fluid, whistling song, to the music of the stream. There were occasions when the bird kept up the song for a minute and even two. The bird was then a picture of joy and laughter. Once the spell was broken, the bird took to wing and reverting to the harsh "Kree-Kree" call, vanished into the green darkness of the Himalayan Woods. The echo of the call lingered for a while and longer if we were camped in a gorge. That was forty years ago!

Now back to Chandigarh. Two weeks later on another very cold morning on 5 Feb. 2002, I checked in mid-stride on hearing "Kree" loud and clear. And joy of joy, less than five metres away was one blue whistling thrush looking up from the stream-bed in the Rose garden! He was in his best feathered splendour; glossy Mediterranean blue tinged with purple by the morning sun and the crescent formed by the five prominent silvery white spots over the median coverts had my heart in flutters. Sounding a tentative "Kree", he alighted on a branch of a bottle-brush tree, level with my eyes. Changed perch from left to right, pecked at the bark, stole a side glance at me and then, was gone keeping to the contours of the stream.

Whether by chance or by instinct the bird's stop-over space in the Rose garden is the closest man-made replication of his natural habitat. There is the meandering stream, alas sans rushing water and boulders, both its banks planted with bottle brush trees. The trees are sturdy and tall, their canopies dense and the inward spread of foliage forms an arch over the stream for most of its length. Regrettably, the trickle flow in the stream, has neither the kind of vitality nor the music to inspire the blue whistling thrush song.

How was the bird here? Back home I scanned my two latest bird books, one by Messers Grimmett and Inskipps (1998) and the other by Krys Kazmierczak (2000). According to both the bird need not be here but they concede to solitary records from Punjab and Haryana; and Chandigarh happens to be tentatively in the center of the bird sightings shown on the distribution maps in these books. Not fully satisfied, I opened Whistler (1924) who happily resolves the issue thus, "..... strictly speaking a resident species (Himalayas), its fine powers of flight tend to make it wander a good deal and in the winter months numbers move down into the foot-hills while stragglers even appear in the plains far out of sight of the hills." So here is something to look out for, in the coming winter 2002-03.

I had put the blue whistling thrush aside atleast till the next winter. So I thought, till jolted once again by several "kree-kree" calls from directly over-head on 05 April, 2002. There he was on a *Ficus benjamina* tree but I could not fathom the cause of his excitement at the persistence of calling. There was no response. Because of my indiscretions, he made away towards the stream in the rose garden, some 500 metres away, and fell silent. But that was not the last encore. On 07, April, 2002 he called and flew right across my walk-path, the yellow of his beak unmistakably on full display as he seemed to be heading North. That the blue whistling thrush does visit Chandigarh and remains around till early April seems probable.

In concluding, I simply must return to Whistler again who had such a special empathy with the avians. Just look at this sensitivity in his narrative on the blue whistling thrush; "...the bird seems the living embodiment of all the qualities of vitality and fitness that one associates with nature and the hills". That was so when the bird went by the name Himalayan whistling thrush, when Mumbai was Bombay and Chennai was Madras!



I am presently posted in Kashmir and have been since enthralled by the diversity of avifauna that exists here. The birds that I have observed and identified in this area, to name a few are the Indian griffon vultures, yellow billed blue magpie, paradise flycatchers, white wagtails, yellow headed wagtails, (now renamed as yellow wagtail), Himalayan whistling thrush, white cheeked bulbuls, blossom headed parakeets, kestrel, pied kingfishers, Brahminy, jungle and Indian mynas, hoopoes and so on. These were observed at heights varying from 1500 metres to 3500 metres. Apart from these, I would also like to share a few interesting observations with the readers.

In January - February 2002, white wagtails were aplenty here (Western Kashmir, height - 1500 metres). These white wagtails were inevitably found flitting about in groups of 5 - 6 from one place to another in a golf course, feeding on insects on the ground. One day, amongst these white wagtails, I even spotted two yellow coloured birds. On closer observation with binoculars, I identified the pair to be yellow headed wagtails that were mingling quite freely in the group of white wagtails. After being away from this place from Mar 13 to Mar 29, when I returned the wagtails (both, white and yellowheaded) were nowhere to be found ! They had vanished without a trace ! Did they migrate to some place else ?!

In May-June, I was at a place in the same area but now at a

Enthralling Birds of Kashmir

Capt. ROHIT GUPTA, 370 Fd Coy, 12 Inf Bde, c/o 56 APO

height of 3100metres. Apart from the griffon vultures soaring high up in the skies everyday, I was witness to a 'kestrel' in the sky performing its unique 'balancing act'. It would hover at a spot in mid air constantly peering down on the ground for its prey. On spotting something it would start losing height vertically, in a zigzag manner to catch its prey on the ground. The drill would then be repeated. It is noteworthy that the bird would always be against the wind when performing this hovering feat. The wings of the bird would be spread out (without flapping) and only the wingtips would be hovering to keep its balance, but, it was really a visual treat to watch this aerodynamic feat of the kestrel.

In the same area (height - 3100 metres), I spotted a pair of small sparrow-sized birds perched together on a shrub. On observation with binoculars from around 10 metres, I found one of them black and white with white throat, a prominent white brow on the eyes and a perky tail which it jerked up frequently. The other bird was also similar except that the black portions in the first bird were replaced by brown. On referring to the 'The Book of Indian Birds' by Salim Ali, I found these traits matching that of a 'pied flycatcher shrike'. However, in this book there is no mention of white brows on the eyes and the perky tail, against the description of this bird. Also, it was obvious from my observation that the pair was the male and female. Once, when I approached them for a closer look, they flew off together into the dense undergrowth of shrubs.



Birds Recorded on a Trek to the Valley of Flowers National Park: The Upper Garhwal Himalaya

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The birds of upper Garhwal Himalayas were first recorded by Osmaston in 1921. Later, others followed including Lavkumar, Devillers and Sankaran (1994). However, none of them included the area of the valley of Flowers National Park. This valley is about 5 km. long and 2 km. wide and has the largest concentration of 600 wild flower species, endemic to the Himalayas.

A total of 28 species of birds were recorded during the survey. Although all the species have earlier been recorded from upper Garhwal, the record of striped throated Yuhina, *Yuhina gularis* is new for the recently formed Chamoli district. (This species has been earlier recorded from Kedarnath sanctuary (Green, 1986) which is now Rudraprayag district (Fig.1).

Yellow-rumped honey guide, *Indicator xanthonotus* (2). A globally near-threatened species. Observed between Govind ghat and Bhyundar hovering over an occupied rock bee (*Apis dorsata*) comb hanging on rocky cliffs along the Laxman Ganga river. The birds were observed feeding on bees/bee-wax while hovering close to the comb and retreating to a leafless branch on the cliffs nearby.

Golden eagle, *Aquila chrysaetos* (2). A juvenile and an adult seen soaring high on the way to the valley of flowers from Ghangaria.

Himalayan monal, *Lophophorus impejanus* (2+). A small party flew over rocky slopes on the way at Hemkund towards the VOFNP.

Himalayan snowcock, *Tetraogallus himalayensis*, (2+). Call, a wailing prolonged whistle, heard on the western slopes of VOFNP along the Donagiri river from a distance. On approaching, the birds were noted climbing up the slopes, before disappearing.

Winter wren, *Troglodytes troglodytes* (1). One bird hopping on piled up stone wall and rocks beside a hut on the way to Hemkund from Ghangaria.

Chestnut-tailed minla, *Minla strigula* (1). (Now called as bar-throated minla) Noted between Ghangaria and Bhyundar on taxus trees.

Stripe throated yuhina, *Yuhina gularis* (1). Observed on silver fir (*Abies pindrow*) trees between Ghangaria and Bhyundar in a mixed hunting party of tits.

Rufous sibia, *Heterophasia capistrata* (1). An individual observed calling on the way between Bhyundar and Ghangaria.

Variegated laughing thrush, *Garrulax variegatus* (2). Recorded in forest undergrowth between Bhyundar and Ghangaria.

Chestnut crowned laughing thrush, *Garrulax erythrocephalus* (3). Recorded among small bushy shrubs near Bhyundar.

Blue whistling thrush, *Myiophonus caeruleus* (1). Recorded in a gorge beside Laxman Ganga river between Pulna and Bhyundar.

Goldcrest, *Regulus regulus* (2+). Recorded at Ghangaria on trees beside the small forest rest house.

Blyth's leaf warbler, *Phylloscopus reguloides* (4+). Many present in alpine meadows and on *Betula utilis* trees in VOFNP. Call also heard. Probably breeding on slopes in the valley of flowers as one bird was observed carrying an insect in its beak.

Tickell's willow warbler, *Phylloscopus affinis*. (1). Recorded inside a fir forest near Ghangaria.

Lemon-rumped leaf warbler, *Phylloscopus chloronotus* (1). Observed near Pulna village.

Blue-fronted redstart, *Phoenicurus frontalis* (2). One noted on barren rocky slopes on the way to Hemkund from Ghangaria and the other along the river far north in the VOFNP.

Brown dipper, *Cinclus cinclus* (2). Recorded along the torrents of small streams, with blooming *Epilobium latifolium* flowers, flowing across the meadows in the VOFNP.

Spotted nutcracker, *Nucifraga caryocatactes* (1). Recorded flying overhead across the river Bhyundar Ganga at Bhyundar.

Redbilled chough, *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax* (2) Making sorties over Pushpavati river in northern part of Valley of Flowers.

Large billed crow, *Corvus macrorhynchos* (4). Recorded flying over Govindghat.

Grey crested tit, *Parus dichrous* (1). Seen on fir and maple trees near Ghangaria.

Black throated tit, *Aegithalos concinnus* (6). Found in small parties at Ghangaria and Bhyundar.

Alpine accentor, *Prunella collaris* (1). Photographed sitting on the roof of a small hut beside the trail on way to Hemkund from Ghangaria. Yellow base of lower mandible distinct.

Rufous breasted accentor, *Prunella strophia* (2). Recorded near Hemkund shrine on the rocks.

Hodgson's plain mountain finch, *Leucosticte nemoricola* (11). Sparrow like birds observed from a close distance feeding on the ground beside the Hemkund shrine.

Collared grosbeak, *Mycerobas affinis* (2). A pair was noted perching low in a shady patch of fir trees between Bhundhar and Ghangaria.

Dark-breasted rosefinch, *Carpodacus nipalensis* (5). A small party seen feeding on the ground on barren rocky slopes inside the Valley of Flowers.

Red-headed bull finch, *Pyrrhula erythrocephala* (2) Seen twice on fir trees at Ghangaria in the morning beside the rest house.

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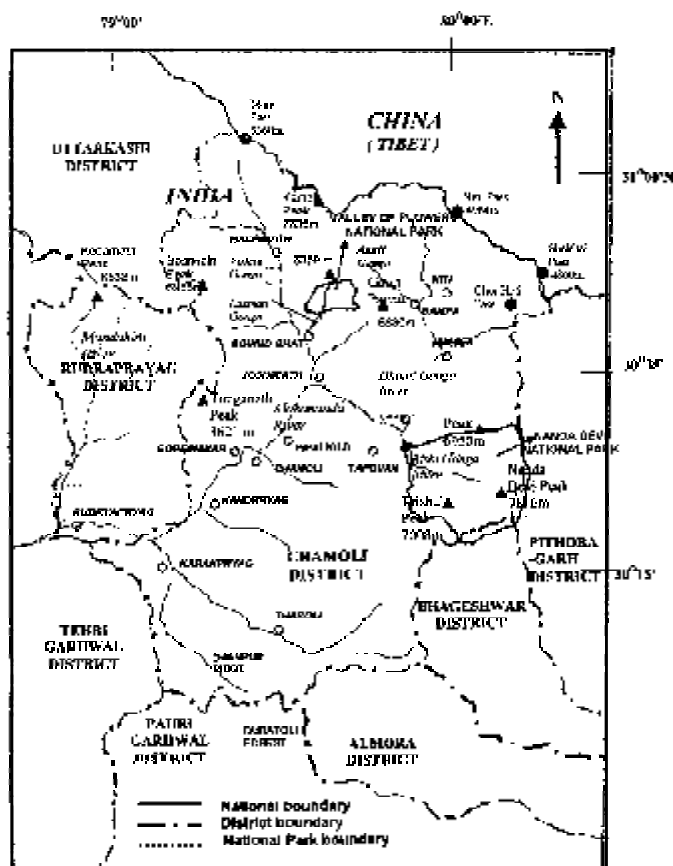


Fig. 1. Map of Chamoli district depicting the location of valley of Flowers National Park and sites as mentioned in the text

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Birds of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Chandrapur, Maharashtra

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Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve is an important tiger reserve of India. In 1935 Tadoba (district Chandrapur, Maharashtra) was declared a Game Sanctuary and in 1955 it became a National Park. Till February 1986 the Tadoba National Park was small, with an area of 166 sq. kms. In 1986 Andhari wildlife sanctuary (508.85 sq.kms.) was declared. The National park derives its name from the local tribal god "Taru" whereas the Andhari river flowing through the forest gives the sanctuary its name. In 1955 'Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve' with 625.40 sq. kms. area came into being.

I spent almost five hot days in May this year in Tadoba, watching wildlife and birds. Tadoba is a dry, deciduous forest, with a 120 hectare water body, the Lake Tadoba. The forest consists, mainly of teak (*Tectona grandis*) and bamboo (*Bambusa sp.*) interspread with grassy meadows, as grasslands form a very vital constituent in tiger eco-system. The other associates are ain (*Terminalia tomentosa*), bija (*Pterocarpus marsupium*), dhaoda (*Anogeissus latifolia*), haldu (*Adina cordifolia*), salai (*Boswellia serrata*), tendu (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), arjun (*Terminalia arjuna*), jamun (*Syzygium cumini*), mahuwa (*Madhuca indica*), silk cotton (*Salmaal malbarica*), palas (*Butea monosperma*), karanj (*Pongamia pinnata*), tembhurni (*Diospyros sp.*) and many more. One tree which attracted me which had no foliage, no flowers and no fruits was kuru (*Sterculia urens*) [known as the white man because of its white trunk and branches].

Though Tadoba has rugged hilly territory, the sanctuary area is rather plain. The tiny streams and man-made waterholes provide water to wild animals and birds. The faunal diversity of the forest is very rich. Though the major attraction of the sanctuary is the tiger and other large mammals, the avian fauna is also remarkable and makes a lasting impression on the visitors. Paradise flycatcher (*Terpsiphone paradisi*) was always seen flitting gracefully in the shady trees around the lake and streams in the Panchadhara area. While in flight the streamers of the male float gracefully behind. The birds (male and female) were once observed taking bath in a small pond at Panchadhara and the male was diving from a fallen tree trunk that he was using as its perch. Male, female and subadult were seen flying together along the side of the lake particularly in the afternoon. The Panchadhara area has huge tall trees where we observed the mottled wood

owl (*Strix ocellata*) hidden in the thick foliage. We observed its white facial disc and white foreneck collar through the binoculars as the bright sun light was penetrating through the leaves. We could not hear the famous harsh screeching call of the bird.

While on a trail alongside of a small stream, a small blue flash hovering over the water was our prime entertainment. This small blue kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) was seen singly many times. The Tickell's blue flycatcher (*Muscicapa tickelliae*) sitting on low bushes beside the stream was occasionally darting from branch to branch. Golden backed woodpeckers (*Dinopium sp.*) flew from tree to tree and in characteristic fashion, were hammering the tree trunks.

While on a foot trail around lake Tadoba, a honey buzzard (*Pernis ptilorhynchus*) soaring over the expanse of the lake, suddenly perched on the top branch of a totally dry tree very close to us. We could clearly observe its silvery grey wings, and the round greyish tail with its broad dark and pale bands. The pied kingfisher (*Ceryle rudis*) was stationarily hovering over the lake and fishing in characteristic fashion. Many water birds could be seen around the lake.

On Pandherponi road side we enjoyed the sight of a flock of about 20-25 green pigeons (*Treron phoenicoptera*) feeding on a flig laden tree; the birds flew away when one of us stepped down from the vehicle for photography. We heard the loud cackling call of the common grey hornbill (*Tockus birostris*) many times.

The check-list of birds of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve include 195 species, but when we were there, the migrants were, obviously, absent; Only 63 species were recorded during our stay of five days in the reserve.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Mr. Atul Dhamankar, Mr. Pramod Dekate and the team of 'Green Pigeon Nature Society', Chandrapur for their kind help during my visit. Thanks are also due to Mr. Milind Bendale, Ahmednagar for his friendly association during my visit.

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After the initial rain, which filled up the lakes and promised the commencement of a good monsoon, there has been no rain and July has almost gone without any rain. The SW monsoon wind is blasting across Saurashtra and so we can still hope for deluges when the wind stops for a few days.

It seems Indian pittas have become regular breeders here and I heard several birds calling in the ravines around the fort. In earlier years, though pittas regularly put in appearances for a few days during summer, they were known to regularly breed by circumstantial evidence only in the Gir. Dharmakumarsinhji had

The Changing Scene at Hingolghadh

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recorded a nest on Shetrunjaya but this bird was never a breeding bird with us. Whether we should rejoice at the regular spotting as improvement in the habitat or an increase in pitta population is debatable. I had made some comments on the new presence of blackheaded cuckoo shrike and the brain fever bird around Hingolghadh. The cuckoo shrike is no longer heard for the last two monsoons, and this year, the cuckoo is far less audible. Is the increased presence of the pitta then to be rejoiced over or seen as a warning of general environmental degradation in the region as a whole?

The small and whitebellied minivets, Marshall's iora and the yellow-eyed babbler, which were such a delight of the *Molisari* jungle around Hingolghadh, have shown a drastic decline. Last year, there was a significant fall in the numbers of rosy pastors, this year I have yet to see a single bird.

For the last few days a couple of hundred cattle egrets have joined the pigeons in putting grand flight displays around the hills. They seem to have been attracted by an explosion in the population of small brown grasshoppers. In past years, it was the large flocks of rosy pastors (mainly juveniles) who feasted on these insects.

Talking of insects, these are hardly being drawn to lights. We

certainly have succeeded in sanitizing the countryside. Very serious note must be taken of this drastic crash in insect populations. What with over grazing, poor protection of reserved grass lands, destruction of hedge rows, near total shift of cultivation from millets to groundnut and cotton and increased use of inorganic manures and indiscriminate, almost compulsive spraying of pesticides, we are witnessing a mass extinction.

The ray of hope lies in the tenacious survival of indigenous vegetation, which makes a startling comeback given efficient protection, the fecundity of most species of insects and the capability to make adaptations by birds. But, we cannot be casual and must make our concerns taken notice.



Sighting of Indian Skimmer (*Rynchops albicollis*) in the Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary

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Over the years the Indian skimmer (*Rynchops albicollis*) has been sighted off and on in the Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary (VGDS), but were not at any stage numerous. The highest number of skimmers at one sighting was 70 birds in two groups in the year 1997. Since 1999 skimmers have been sighted on a regular basis in the VGDS but their numbers have been low. Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary includes a 60km approx. segment of river Ganga from Sultanganj to Kahalgaon in the state of Bihar.

This year in the first week of May, a group of 26 Indian skimmers along with small Indian pratincole, Indian river tern, little terns and river lapwing were spotted on a sandy midchannel island, in the river Ganga, near Bhagalpur. On investigation it was found to be a nesting ground of these birds. A total of 4 nesting sites of the Indian skimmers were found in which 11 eggs were counted. There were more than a hundred nesting sites of the small Indian pratincole each having 2 or 3 and some with 4 eggs. One nesting site of the Indian river tern with 2 eggs, and 2 nesting sites of the river lapwing with 8 eggs were also found. None of the nesting sites overlapped one another as each bird species seemed to have its own preferred nesting area. The little terns had their own nesting site on a different island, a few hundred meters away.

It is interesting to note that the skimmers though being larger birds, had eggs smaller in size compared to those of the Indian

river terns. It was also observed that the eggs of all the above-mentioned bird species had the same drab light olive grey colour with splotched black/brown markings. It was also observed that the skimmer chicks had taken to wing by the first week of July, just before the advent of the monsoon. A total of eight juvenile skimmers were counted in flight along with the adults in the first week of July 2002.

Skimmers are an example of one of the most specially adapted birds to their environment. They use their unique bills to catch fish in rivers and other waterbodies. The prey is caught by flying low over the water with mouth open, and the lower mandible skimming the surface of the water.

Of the three species found world wide, the Indian skimmer is perhaps facing the highest threat to its survival. The Indian skimmer is classified as "Vulnerable" and the total population is only about 10,000 birds (Zusi 1996). It is restricted to the Indian subcontinent with a small number locally distributed in Southeast Asia. Threats include decline in food availability due to over exploitation of fisheries, loss of habitat due to increasing agricultural encroachment into nesting and roosting places, pollution of rivers and other waterbodies frequented by them and poisoning due to indiscriminate use of pesticides and insecticides in floodplain areas.



Occurrence of Black Throated Weaver Bird (*Ploceus benghalensis*) in the Shimoga District of Karnataka State

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Our fieldwork on the common baya (*Ploceus philippinus*) carried out during July 1999 to January 2000, revealed to our surprise that the black throated baya (*Ploceus benghalensis*) also occurs in Karnataka State. The observations were made twice a week both in the morning (between 7 to 9 a.m.) and evening (4 to 6.30 p.m.).

According to the pioneering research of Manson & Maxwell Lefroy (1912), Salim Ali and Ripley (1973) and other recent ornithologists, *Ploceus benghalensis* is confined only to north India.

To survey the nesting population of *Ploceus benghalensis*, we selected B.R. Project area near the University campus as a central

point. This area is a part of Malnad (heavy rainfall receiving area) located under the foothills of the Western Ghats in Karnataka. The crops of the area include paddy, ragi, sugarcane, jawar. Paddy provides two or three crops annually. The area includes two irrigation systems : Tunga irrigation system and Bhadra irrigation system. The area is rich in water sources and vegetation.

For our convenience the study area was divided into two imaginary zones and as stated the University Campus was considered as a central point. The two zones include, zone I, (B.R. Project) located on the north, and zone II, (Shimoga) in the South East direction, each about 30 km².

The study area includes abandoned fish nursery ponds. These ponds are infested with *Typha* sp vegetation. The blades of *Typha* sp in the abandoned nursery ponds were used for nesting by *Ploceus benghalensis*. As many as 80 leaf blades of *Typha* were used in hanging a nest by these birds. There were 8-10 abandoned fishery nursery ponds used by the black throated weaver birds for nest hanging.

Zone II was a sugarcane plantation. It was found that in all sugarcane plantations around Shimoga *Ploceus benghalensis* was nesting and hanging its nests on the leaves of sugarcane plants. The details about the number of nests in *Typha* sp. and in the sugarcane fields are shown in Table 1 & 2 respectively.

Table-1 : Nesting Population of *Ploceus benghalensis* in Zone I. [B.R. Project Area]

Particulars	Site I	Site II	Site III
Total Number of nests	98	108	34
Name of host plant	<i>Typha</i> sp.	<i>Typha</i> sp.	<i>Typha</i> sp.
Height of nest from the ground	6-8 feet	6-8 feet	6-8 feet
Complete nest/Normal nest	17	26	4
Incomplete nests	81	82	30

Table-2 : Nesting Population of *Ploceus benghalensis* in Zone II. [Shimoga Area]

Particulars	Site I	Site II	Site III
Total Number of nests	65	39	46
Name of host plant	<i>Saccharum</i> sp.	<i>Saccharum</i> sp.	<i>Saccharum</i> sp.
Height of nest from the ground	9-10 feet	9-10 feet	9-10 feet
Complete nests/Normal nests	40	21	18
Incomplete nests	25	18	28

In Zone I, we recorded 240 nests. All the nests were constructed on *Typha* plants and height of the plants was about 6-8 feet from the ground. In this area out of 240 nests only 47 nests were complete and suitable for breeding, and the rest were incomplete or abnormal nests. The rate of success was only 19.5%. It may be due to the disturbance caused by fishermen. These ponds were also used for storing water, which was pumped through regular fishery ponds. The pumping machine was making a sound of more than 90 dB.

Zone II is located on the southeast of the University campus. It was a sugarcane field, where we found 150 nests hung on sugarcane plants. The height of the plant was about 9-10 feet, the rate of success in this case was 52.6%. It was quite high when compared to zone I. This may be due to the reason that the area was surrounded by paddy fields and thick vegetation. Here the disturbance by humans was also low. It was observed that this habitat was shared also with *Ploceus philippinus*.

We found a total number of 390 nests constructed by *Ploceus benghalensis* in both study zones. A single male can construct 2 to 3 nests in a season (Sharma 1995) and so the total population may be around 100 pairs.

Ploceus benghalensis is very specific in its host plant selection, unlike *Ploceus philippinus*, which can hang its nest on a variety of host plants. *Ploceus philippinus* can tolerate human disturbances, whereas *Ploceus benghalensis* is very sensitive to human disturbances. Most of the marshy vegetation in the Malnad area are converted as croplands and due to this change, the survival of *Ploceus benghalensis* is threatened. This has led to loss of breeding places for black throated baya. However, increased sugarcane plantation in the irrigated zones of Karnataka especially Shimoga area, has become a boon for the species. The sugarcane provides raw materials for nesting, protection and breeding grounds as well.

Acknowledgments

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South African Penguins and other birds of South Africa

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I visited the Boulders which is part of Cape Peninsula National Park near Cape Town, South Africa, on 11th May, 2002. This is close to the famous Table Mountain of Cape Point, a tourist attraction. Boulders near False Bay, today has become world famous for its thriving colony of African Penguins and magnificent wind sheltered, safe beaches. The South African penguin is a Red Data Book bird and is the only example of a penguin breeding in Africa. Of the 1.5 million African penguin population estimated in 1910, only some 10% remained at the end of the 20th century. The uncontrolled harvesting of penguin eggs (as a source of food), and guano scraping, nearly drove the species to extinction. They were earlier called the Jackass penguin because of their donkey-like braying call. Since several species of South American penguins produce the same sound, the local birds have been renamed African penguins. Their diet consists mainly of squid and shoal fish such as pilchards and anchovy. They can swim at an average speed of seven kilometers per hour, and can

stay submerged for up to two minutes. The predators of these penguins in the ocean include sharks, Cape fur seals and, on occasion, killer whales (*Orca*). Land-based enemies include mongoose, genet, domestic cats and dogs - and the kelp gulls which steal their eggs. Their distinctive black and white colouring is a vital form of camouflage - white for underwater predators looking upwards and black for predators looking down onto the water. Although the African penguins breed throughout the year, the main breeding season starts in February. They are a monogamous species and the lifelong partners take turns to incubate their eggs and to feed their young. The nest is a bowl-like depression in the sand, and I saw several of these during my recent visit in May, 2002. The peak moulting of the African Penguin is during December, after which they head out to sea to feed (since they do not feed during moulting). They return in January to mate and begin nesting from about February to August. Penguins have very sharp beaks and can cause serious

injury if they bite or lunge. So visitors have to be very wary when approaching them. But, I found them quite adapted to visitors. For the tourists, special wooden bridge walkways are erected wending through mangroves close to the beach, to enable them to watch and enjoy these birds. These penguins are reminiscent of toddlers at play. From just two breeding pairs in 1982, the penguin colony has grown to about 3000 in recent years. This is partly due to the reduction in commercial pelagic trawling in False Bay, which has increased the supply of pilchards and anchovy, which form part of the penguins' diet. Further, demarking their breeding area on the boulders as protected helped in the restoration of the penguins in the last two decades.

Other birds of Cape, South Africa. The cape habitat is called Fynbos Biome. This is the area to the South and West of Cape and plants like protea, erica and restio form shrub lands. Fynbos consists of the Mountain Fynbos and Coastal Fynbos, and both have rich floral biodiversity but less bird biodiversity. Some of the birds sighted in and around Cape Town between 5th and 12th May, 2002 are as follows: Blacknecked grebe, *Podiceps nigricollis*. This is common in saline waters. I could not see the dabchick, *Tachybaptus ruficollis* which is more common in fresh waters. Grey heron, *Ardea cinerea*. This is mostly found in lagoons. Cattle egret, *Bubulcus ibis*. This is commonly found in open meadows following sheep in fenced ranches, typically as we see them in India. South African shelduck, *Tadorna carnata*. This has characteristic black bill and legs, found mostly in fresh waters. Redbilled teal, *Anas erythrorhynchos*. This is the most common teal of South Africa. Ostrich, *Struthio camelus*. These are in fact feral stocks mostly found in ostrich farms, which is also a tourist attraction. Here, ostrich eggs and meat are served as delicacies. The wild ostrich are found only in Namibia and Kalahari. Greyheaded gull, *Larus cirrocephalus*. This is commonly found at the Cape Coast and fairly abundant at the famous waterfront shopping center close to the Cape port. Rock pigeon, *Columba guinea*. Like our blue rock pigeon (*Columba livia*) this is found in the urbanized areas. Laughing dove, *Streptopelia senegalensis*. This is found in urban gardens and even on pavements and footpaths foraging below avenue trees. Little swift, *Apus affinis*. This is seen in flight in urban areas. Pied crow, *Corvus albus*. Seen in small flocks flying in urban areas. I found the bird very beautiful, with white running from behind the neck into breast and belly, rest of the colour being black. The common crow, *Corvus splendens* seen in India is also found in South Africa since 1972, when a small population got established in Durban. Cape robin, *Cossypha caffra*. A sooty grey and orange bird found commonly in parks and gardens. Cape white-eye, *Zosterops pallidus*. This is common in suburban gardens and I saw a flock feeding on small berries on a tree instead of insects. Cape wagtail, *Motacilla capensis*. This is common in parks and gardens. House sparrow, *Passer domesticus*. Typical of the species, it is very common in urban setups. South Africa has a lot of old manors and houses with sloping roofs providing ample nesting sites for house sparrows. Cape sparrow, *Passer melanurus*. Common both in urban and outskirt areas. The male has a pied head and chestnut back. There are some active birdwatchers clubs in South Africa.

Those interested may contact the following: 1. Cape Bird Club, PO Box 5022, Cape Town 8000, South Africa. 2. Eastern Cape Wild Bird Society, PO Box 27454, Greenacres 6057, South Africa. 3. Diaz Crass Bird Club, 39 African Street, Grahamstown 6140, South Africa.

Suggested book for reference: Ian Sinclair and Phil Hockey. The larger illustrated guide to birds of South Africa. Illustrated by Peter Hayman and Norman Arlott, Struck Publication Limited, Cape Town.

REVIEW

A FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF DAKSHINA KANNADA.
By K. PRABHAKAR ACHAR & K. GEETHA NAYAK.

With 211 black and white sketches by Sheik Irfan Kuntalpad. Printed in English and Kannada. Bhuvanendra Nature Club, 211pp. Rs. 100.

In a recent TV interview, Mr. Theodore Bhaskaran deplored the fact that most writing on natural history particularly on ornithology was in English; there was very little material in local or regional languages. This meant that many people who lived in villages or small towns, the very people who had best chance of sustained and continual observation, were deprived of useful material. Hot on the heels of Mr. Bhaskaran's complaint had come in two books, one in Kachchi, printed in the Gujarati script, and the other one printed in both English and Kannada, a fine innovation.

The general chapters on birdwatching, breeding, nesting, migration are written in English. This is followed by short descriptions of 212 species in English and Kannada. This and the accompanying sketches, where the artist has caught the characteristic look and posture of each bird makes identification easy.

This small light inexpensive but valuable field guide should play an important part in turning the villagers of Karnataka into birdwatchers (and conservationists).

L.F.

CORRESPONDENCE

COLLARED SCOPS OWL – A RESIDENT BREEDING SPECIES OF GUJARAT, B.M. PARASHARYA and ANIKA JADHAV, AINP on Agricultural Ornithology, Gujarat Agricultural University, Anand 388 110

In the morning of 15 April, 2002, we saw a chick of a Collared scops owl *Otus bakkamoena* being harassed by two jungle crows near the workshop of our university campus (G.A.U. Anand). On 16 April, we searched for its nest around the site where the chick was found. We saw an adult scops owl sitting at the edge of a cavity Ca. 5m. above the ground on a *Peltophorum* tree, and found one more chick in the same cavity. On 27 May 1988, a juvenile of the same species was found in the campus of Gujarat Agricultural University, Anand (22° 32'N, 73° 00'E) by one of us (BMP).

Grimmett *et al.* (1998) has not shown the distribution of this species in Gujarat. They say that it is resident throughout much of the subcontinent, except parts of the north-west and north-east and parts of Central and Eastern India. In the map, it is shown absent from entire Gujarat and much of Rajasthan. Recently, Kazmierczak (2000) has also not shown its distribution in Gujarat but has placed a single green asterisk mark indicating that it is a resident species with isolated records. It seems that both Grimmett *et al.* (1998) and Kazmierczak (2000) have largely followed Ali and Ripley (1983) who say that this species is resident, approximately between 21° and 24° N from the Surat Dang (Gujarat) eastward through Khandesh (Maharashtra) and Madhya Pradesh to Orissa and Southern West Bengal. The precise limit is not worked out. About the West Pakistan collared scops owl (*O. b. deserticolor*), Ali and Ripley (1983) say that this is possibly the form that occurs in North Gujarat.

During his ornithological survey, Ali (1955) could not obtain any specimen of collared scops owl. He concluded from its calls that it is evidently, fairly common in moist deciduous forest areas of Gujarat that is around Surat Dang. During the same period,

Dharmakumarsinhji (1954) wrote his book on "Birds of Saurashtra". But it seems that the same is not referred to either by Ali and Ripley (1983) or by Grimmett *et al* (1998) and Kazmierczak (2000). Dharmakumarsinhji (1954) had collected specimens from Gir forest where the species seemed to be fairly wide spread. Very clearly he has written that it is uncommon in Saurashtra but resident in the Gir. Recently, Lavkumar (1996) opined that mistnetting operations (where? when?) have established that *Otus bakkamoena* is more widespread than suggested by Salim Ali's report. However, he has not referred to Dharmakumar's work nor commented on the breeding status of the species in Gujarat.

Conclusion

As the *O. bakkamoena* is a resident species in Gir (Dharmakumarsinhji, 1954) and as there are two recent confirmed reports of its breeding from Anand, this species should be considered as "resident breeding species" of Gujarat.

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STANDARDIZED BIRD NAMES : WHO WILL USE THEM ?

B.M. PARASHARYA, AINP on Agricultural Ornithology, Gujarat Agricultural University, Anand 388 110

Both Ranjit Manakadan and Aasheesh Pittie deserve appreciation for bringing out "Standardized common names of the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent". There is no harm - rather it would be convenient to all of us if "Standardized names" are accepted and used in all subsequent publications. The major question is who will use this new "Standardized nomenclature?" An average Indian birdwatcher was using Salim Ali's "Pictorial Guide" until the publications by Grimmett *et al* (1998) and Krys Kazmierczak (2000) came out. Because of the quality of illustrations and affordable price the later publications are widely used now a days, and hence the birdwatchers use the common and scientific names given in the same field guide. And that is the most convenient thing to do. I feel that it will be totally impractical to use one guide for illustrations and another guide for nomenclature. Such a situation may add to the problems rather than putting up "Standardized Nomenclature", into practice. If we want our birdwatcher friends to use "Standardized Nomenclature", a new field guide should be published urgently with following characters:

1. Good quality illustrations (To match the quality of illustrations in Grimmett *et al* and Krys Kazmierczak).
2. Standardized nomenclature (Prepared by Ranjit Manakadan and Aasheesh Pittie).
3. Price that can be affordable to an average Indian birdwatcher (i.e. Not to exceed Rs. 700/-)

The entire exercise of standardizing the nomenclature will go waste if this is not done immediately. I wish BNHS would take immediate action in this matter.

COMB DUCK *SARKIDIORNIS MELANOTUS* (PENNANT, 1769) IN THE THAR DESERT OF RAJASTHAN, INDIA. SANJEEV KUMAR, C. SIVAPERUMAN, M. PARDESHI and Q.H. BAQRI, Desert Regional Station, Zoological Survey of India, Pali Road, Jhalamand, Jodhpur 342 005

Wetlands are important habitats for several species of waterfowl and waders. Out of 1,22,541 ha wetland in Rajasthan surprisingly 62, 140 ha area is in the Thar desert. The Thar desert is more or less treeless, and dry open grassland (Gupta, 1975), with nearly 58% of the area under sand dunes (Shankarnarayan, 1988). Despite the harsh climate, the Thar desert exhibits rich avian fauna.

According to Grewal, (1995) comb duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* (Pennant, 1769) is a resident all over India, but uncommon in the extreme South and Northwest India. In the Indian subcontinent some workers have reported the comb duck from various regions, viz., Webb (1912), Gibson (1918) and Rubie (1935) at Sind in Pakistan; in India Basil (1921) in Allahabad; Foster (1927) in Madhya Pradesh; Stoney (1942) and Adams (1943) in Mysore; Deuti (1997) in West Bengal; Revindran (1998) in Kerala; Alfred *et al* (2001) in Northern India and Kumar (2002) (Pers. comm..) in Nalsarovar wetland, Gujarat.

Though Livesey (1921) has reported comb duck breeding at Kota in Rajasthan, the studies conducted by various scientists on avifauna of the Thar Desert have not reported this species till date from this region (Rana, 1973; Agoramoorthy & Mohnot, 1986; Bohra & Goyal, 1992; Sangha, 1993 & 1994; Sangha & Kulshreshtha, 1993; Bohra & Rana, 1994; Rahmani, 1994, 1997a, 1997b & 1997c; Rahmani & Sankaran, 1995; Sekar, 1998; Islam, 1999 and Changani, 2002). In view of this fact, this is the first report from the Thar desert of Rajasthan.

As a part of the studies of faunal diversity in the Thar desert of Rajasthan initiated in the year 2000, comb duck, a Schedule IV species, was recorded in the Thar desert on 4th July, 2002. The specimen was a sub-adult male collected from Phool Bagh Bera near Kure Haud by the side of Jojari River, Jodhpur. The wings of this male collided with high voltage electric wire at 2100 hrs, but fortunately it was not electrocuted. The injury was in its under tail coverts. Morphometric measurements of the species are as follows: Bill length (6 cm), Wing length (37 cm) and Tarsus (7.5 cm). The other characters like black above glossed with blue and green on dorsal side, white on ventral side, head and neck speckled with black, fleshy knob (comb) on top of the beak are in conformity with the standard description.

The specimen is preserved and kept in the museum of Desert Regional Station, Zoological Survey of India at Jodhpur.

The authors are thankful to the Director, ZSI, Kolkata, for providing the research facilities. The financial assistance from the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Govt. of India is also acknowledged.

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PREDATION OF NIGHT HERON ON CATTLE EGRET NESTLING. S. SIVAKUMAR and GARGI RANA, *Bombay Natural History Society, Hornbill House, S.B. Singh Road, Mumbai 400 023*

During a heronry count in September 1999, we observed an unusual attempt to predate by the night heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*. It was a huge mixed heronry of storks, egrets, herons and ibises near Ghana canal in Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur. We were counting and noting down their numbers.

A cattle egret nest, on a middle branch of an *Acacia nilotica* tree, had two nestlings. They were completely covered with down feathers. A night heron sitting a foot away from the nest, was trying to approach the nestlings by projecting its head towards the nest. The frightened nestlings threatened the intruder with their stretched necks and erect down, several times. We thought it was a normal association among colony breeders. After a few minutes, we repeated the count in the same area and were surprised to see that the night heron caught a nestling from the nest and tried to swallow it. The nestling was comparatively large for the night heron, which swallows prey entirely. The night heron started swallowing the head of the nestling but could not swallow the bulging abdominal portion. After twenty minutes of trying, the night heron dropped the nestling. It did not try again for either the fallen nestling or the live one in the nest.

The night heron is an opportunistic feeder on fishes, frogs, aquatic insects, dragonfly larvae (Ali and Ripley 1987, Grimmett *et al* 1998), tadpoles, rodents, snakes, lizards, spiders, crustaceans, molluscs, leeches and bats, and it consumes the eggs and chicks of terns, ibises and even of other herons (Hoyo *et al* 1992). Hancock and Elliott (1978) mention that they have seen night herons regularly visiting Manana island ternaries to steal chicks in the evening. But, this daytime (1530hrs) hunting attempt to steal the cattle egret nestling is unusual and worth sharing.

Acknowledgment

We thank Dr. Vibhu Prakash, Principal Scientist and Mr. N. Sivakumaran Research Assistant, BNHS for their suggestions on this note and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for financial support for the project.

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NOTES ON CHESTNUT-WINGED CUCKOO AND GREAT HORNBILL. ARUNAYAN SHARMA, *N.S. Road, in front of T.O.P, Malda 732 101, West Bengal*

On 15th April, 2001 morning I was watching birds at Malda Agricultural Training Centre. At around 0915 hrs suddenly I got a glimpse of a crow sized brownish bird fly sluggishly from one Mango tree to another in the orchard.

After searching for more than five minutes, I spotted the bird on a mango tree, c.4m from the ground devouring a caterpillar. As the bird flew from one tree to another, I continuously chased the bird for more than 30 minutes. In between I did not hear any call but recorded its plumage as; wings rusty or chestnut with a long shiny black tail, orangish hue from throat to breast, with a white half band on its neck. The back over all shiny black having, a prominent

crest. I identified the species in the field easily as an adult chestnut-winged cuckoo *Clamator coromandus* (Grimmett *et al* – 1999, Kazmierczak *et al* – 2000).

The Agricultural Training Centre (c. 40m ASL) is situated 2 km from English Bazar (Malda town) in Malda district, West Bengal. The natural habitat of this area included a few large trees, agricultural lands and mango orchards. The Malda district is situated partially in the Gangetic flood plains and in the Sub-Himalayan ranges (Ghosh – 1999). Sighting of this species in Central West Bengal is noteworthy for first time from the Central West Bengal. As per published authentic data it was recorded from Central & Southern West Bengal after 15 years.

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SAND BATH BY GREAT HORNBILL *Buceros bicornis*

On 18th February, 2002 I was at Jayanti range of Buxa Tiger Reserve, Jalpaiguri district, West Bengal for the animal census. After a day long census operation at around 1600hrs I stopped for a while at 13 number block waterhole to see some animals on the way to my camp. I noticed a pair of great hornbill *Buceros bicornis* on the dusty forest tract c. 100m from me.

At first I thought that they were on the ground to pick some fruits, as hornbills are occasionally used to do. But after 10 minutes I noticed that they were not moving from the spot. I approached towards them as close as possible c. 20m and looked through 10x50 binocular that they were actually playing in the sand. Both of them created a shallow depression in the dusty forest track and sat c. 1m from each other.

After a close observation for more than 30 minutes I observed that both of them were just playing in the sand and enjoying the sand bath.

I wished to observe them more but at around 1720hrs they were disturbed by a herd of 27 bison *Bos gaurus* and flew inside the deep forest. Hornbills are arboreal but occasionally they come down on the ground to pick fallen fruits. I never saw or heard about the sand bathing of great hornbills *Buceros bicornis* and found this observation noteworthy.

RANGE EXTENSION OF STOLICZKA'S BUSHCHAT OR WHITE BROWED BUSHCHAT. SUMIT DOOKIA, *Desert Regional Station, Zoological Survey of India, Pali Road, Jhalamand, Jodhpur 342 005 (Raj.) India*

On October 21, 2001 at 3.30 pm a pair of Stoliczka's bush chats (*Saxicola macrorhyncha*) was seen sitting on a twig of *Capparis decidua* in Gogelao Enclosure of Nagaur District (Rajasthan).

I observed them for nearly 15min with the help of my binoculars (10x50) from a distance of 50 metres. The male is darker than the female in non-breeding plumage and differs from the Stonechat, mainly by its wide and long white eyebrow and longer bill. Again I sighted a male at the same place on 11 November, 2001.

Gagelao Enclosure (73° 40' to 73° 43' E and 27° 14' N), is situated in the Nagaur District's headquarters Nagaur city in the Northwestern side of Nagaur-Bikaner National Highway No. 89, 2km away from the city. This is a forest enclosure, comprising nearly 5 sq.km. area with plain and has only a few small dunes at southern side. The average rainfall of this enclosure is 389 mm annually, 1°C to 48°C is the temperature variation per annum. Scrub, xerophytic type habitat with *Capparis decidua*, *Prosopis cineraria* and *Acacia tortolis* are the dominant plants.

During my 1 ½ years of avian study this is my first encounter with this small endemic bird on the semi arid area of northwest Thar desert of Rajasthan.

According to many birdwatchers, nowadays due to the expansion of irrigated area of the Thar desert, mainly Rajasthan desert, the sighting of this small rare bird is very rare.

Roberts (1992) supposed that, this bird is nowadays extinct in the Pakistan side of the Thar, because it is unable to adapt to the spread of irrigation and cultivation. Rahmani (1994, 1996, 1997) said, that in the Thar desert it is not so rare as supposed earlier and in some places it is very common. Its preferred habitat is *Capparis decidua* dominating habitat (Rahmani 1997). This new site is dense with *Capparis* bushes. Still various mysteries prevail about its movement because maximum sightings of this bird by birdwatchers are in winter. I observed it again in winter. The white-browed bush chat is considered local and resident, Ali and Ripley (1983), and apparently an endemic species (Roberts, 1992).

Recently the reappearance of this bird near Sultanpur National Park (Haryana); a semi-arid tract, was noticed by Bill Harvey (2001).

This bird is mainly a resident of the Thar desert, but its typical habitat was described as desert biotope. But it was also found in semi-arid area (eg. Aligarh, Meerut in western Uttar Pradesh). It appears that these areas were marginal for the species and its main stronghold was the vast waterless, sandy plain of the Thar desert. Besides habitat alteration, there does not appear to be any other threat to this rare tiny white-browed bushchat (Rahmani, 1997).

But recent sighting of this rare bird in this semi-arid part of Thar desert is new. So it may be a range extension of this rare and endemic bird.

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DOES THE REDSHANK HAVE ALBINISM? SUMIT DOOKIA, Desert Regional Station, Zoological Survey of India, Pali Road, Jhalamand, Jodhpur 342 005 (Raj.) India

On 19th January 2002 I was at Guda Bishnoian closed area only 20 km away from Jodhpur City (Rajasthan), in the east-southern side. I found a big flock of about 500 individuals of common red shank (*Tringa totanus*) sitting on a bank of a big pond named "Guda Bada Talab" attached to the Luni river catchment area. The water of this pond is somewhat salty in taste and harboring nearly all brackish water birds. In this flock I noticed a white colored bird, which was looking like a pied avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*) from a distance, but with the help of my binoculars (10x50), I identified and found an unusual bird that was an adult common red shank with complete white colour with characteristic orange coloured beak with a black tip, and typical orange legs. I again went to that site on 21st January 2002 and saw this bird with the same big flock carrying on its activities in normal manner.

Common redshanks come every year in winter, but in my three years study I never encountered this type of redshank.

THE SARJAPURA WETLAND. ALAN H MORELY, Bryn Dyffryn, Iolyn park, Conwy, Aberconwy, LL32 8UX, UK

These small areas of what most people would call waste land are in fact VERY IMPORTANT feeding areas for many species of birds and also the insects and other wild life that the birds feed on. As these small areas disappear in the name of "development" (for humans), wild life is pushed ever further away or disappears altogether. These small, seemingly insignificant areas are very very important for our dwindling wild life.

This particular site is ideally placed being so near a school. This school could easily get involved in study projects and monitoring of the many species of birds and so on that use the area. It could get the children interested in conservation and wild life and the protection of the environment as part of their education.

If the school could be encouraged to take an active interest in their immediate surroundings, i.e. the wetland by their school, they could also go some way towards protecting the site for future generations of school children as well as protecting the area for wild life. Guidance and advice for this kind of school educational project is available from such organizations as the Bombay Natural History Society or the Madras Naturalists Society.

THE AVIAN WEALTH OF LAKHIMPUR KHERI DISTRICT. URUJ SHAHID, Near Pandit-Chakki, Moh. Maharaj Nagar, Lakhimpur Kheri, Uttara Pradesh 262 701. Email : uruj_shahid@rediffmail.com

Lakhimpur Kheri is the second largest district of Uttar Pradesh and is located between 27° - 41' and 28° - 42' N Lat. And 80° - 2' & 81° - 19' E Long in the Himalayan foothills, where usually a cool tropical breeze blows from the East on moonlit nights. During spring and summer, when the trees are overlaid with fresh green foliage, the frantic calls of brainfever birds, Asian koels and barbets resound endlessly from all sides.

The total number of species recorded in Kheri is about 450, of which nearly 300 can be seen in the Dudwa National Park (DNP) and the Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary, which contain dense sal forests as well as grasslands of Elephant grass. The world famous Dudwa National Park (680 sq. km.) is situated on the Indo Nepal Border in Lakhimpur Kheri district. So also the Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary (227 Sq. Km.) established in 1972, the land of rhinos, swamp deer, bengal florican and especially the royal bengal tiger, constituted in 1977.

As October brings shorter days and colder weather into the Indian subcontinent, our migrant birds start to arrive from their breeding

haunts and spread out in all directions of Lakhimpur Kheri and beyond.

There are several small and calm rivers flowing through this district. These rivers have created some fine wetlands (tals), in the district such as Banke, Bade, Chedia, Kakerha, Ajit Nagar, Giraja Barrage and others. Understandably, a large number of migratory birds visit these tals as well as the rivers during winter. Apart from these water birds, a great variety of hill birds too can be seen in this region.

Lying in the Terai belt of the Indo-Gangetic plains Lakimpur Kheri has an exceptional variety of trees suitable for birds. The native trees specially are a great asset for bird life.

To name a few : mango, nimbu (citrus, limon), guava, pomegranate, peach, (*Prunus persica*), papaya, jamun, arjun, (*Terminalia arjuna*), desi babul (*Acacia nilotica*), tamarind, peepal, banyan, *Salmalia malabarica*, silk cotton and many more. The exotic flowering trees are, as is well known, not as attractive to our avifauna as the local trees.

In spite of the damage done to the environment by the cutting down of trees and other development activities, this District inhabits such rare birds like the sarus crane, bengal florican, marbled teal (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*) and swamp francolin (*Francolinus gularis*).

This District is reputed to have at least 450 species which I am listing here. (List not reproduced for lack of space – Editor). I give below the birds which I have seen personally and which have given the great pleasure. The author would welcome comments and enquiries from birdwatcher over E-mail or by correspondence.

Grey bellied cuckoo (*Cacomantis passerinus*), Asian palm swift (*Cypsiurus belasiensis*), Jungle owlet (*Glaucidium radiatum*), Oriental turtle dove (*Streptopelia orientalis*), Lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), Greater adjutant (*Leptoptilos dubius*), Plain martin (*Riparia paludicola*), Streak throated swallow (*Hirundo fluvicola*), Jungle prinia (*Prinia sylvatica*), Orphean warbler (*Sylvia hortensis*), Common chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*) Thick billed flowerpecker (*Dicaeum agile*).

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GIANT HERON RECORDED IN JHARKHAND (BIHAR). KRISHNAU BHATTACHARYA, Estt., Dcos(TM), CLW, Chittaranjan, Burdwan 713331

I had gone to a lonely area beside the Ajay river in Jharkhand (Bihar) to study wetland birds and some other migratory birds. I have seen many species of birds. Here I saw a goliath heron or giant heron (*Ardea goliath*), for the first time in this state.

I had gone to that area for twenty days, with my group to study birds. On 6 of January, 2002 morning I was busy observing water birds. On both sides of the river there were tall grasses and some other plants. At 9.20 in the morning I was attracted by some movement of a large bird, which was standing on the opposite side of the river.

At first I was attracted by the huge size of that bird. It was a bird with long legs, long neck and long pointed bill. I observed it with my binoculars and was amazed to identify it as a giant heron. I observed it for 20 minutes with my binoculars and spot scope along with other partners. It was a gray-brown coloured bird with long black legs and long black bill, it was almost double the size of a purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*), it had no cap or crest on its head, like purple heron. Our movements disturbed that bird and it flew away. It was flapping its wings slowly and continuously.

I had seen only a single bird several times, I was searching for other individuals of the same species in that area but I did not succeed.

INDIAN SWIFTLET AT TIGER HILL IN TAMIL NADU. VISHWAS KATDARE, Near Laxminarayan temple, Chiplun, Dist. Ratnagiri, Maharashtra 415 605.

We visited the breeding colony of Indian swiftlets *Collocalia unicolor* at Tiger hill in Ooty, Tamil Nadu (with reference to the Newsletter article 'So called Indian edible nest swiftlet *Collocalia unicolor* by M.P. Walkev, May 1978) to see the current status of the breeding colony. Fortunately this small breeding colony was seen undisturbed. There are two small caves in which 125 nests were seen. The breeding was in all stages : eggs, just hatched nestlings, juveniles.

A letter received from ZSI addressed to Chief Wildlife Warden, Nagpur, Maharashtra, says they have proposed to include the entire family Apodidae in the appropriate schedule of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972. It reads :

"The entire family Apodidae including this species *Collocalia unicolor* Jerdon may be included in the appropriate Wildlife schedule to stop the poaching activity which is in practice for last so many years".

We are sending this letter to the Chief Conservator of Forest Bangalore, Karnataka and other concerned organizations.

BLACKHEADED MUNIA IN DENSELY POPULATED TRICHUR. T.V. JOSE, 8, Reena Apartments, Chincoli Bunder Road, Malad (W), Mumbai 400 064.

Blackheaded munia (*Lonchura malacca*) is a bird commonly seen in swampy fields and nearby grassy patches. It appears now some of these birds have been invading densely populated areas of Trichur town. What is remarkable in this town is the nonexistence of (or nearly so of) common house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*). What I suspect is that these munias will take over the niche sparrows could have filled in course of time.

A friend of mine has the habit of hanging weaver birds' pendulous neatly woven nests from the ceiling of the verandah of his house. Some of the visiting munias found these deserted nests usable to roost and to raise their young and they saved the trouble and time to build the nests in their own fashions.

Tree pie (Indian tree pie, *Dendrocitta vagabunda*) would occasionally drop in to steal their eggs from these occupied nests and perhaps the juicy soft chicks. My friend planned a device to protect the eggs and nestlings of the munias from "treepiean" raids. He made a wooden box of 5" breadth, 4½" height and length 13" spending his time and effort to accord hospitality to the uninvited guests. Of course there were two small holes at equal distance on one of the broad sides of the box wide enough for the birds to go in and out. This was hung side by side of the weaver bird nests. Munias ignored these ersatz wooden contraption to my friend's disappointment. Tree pies continue their rounds as usual now. What surprised him is the fact that the munias did not enter the box in spite of the placement of some of

their chicks in the box. What could be the reason for this hostile aversion for the wooden box? Is it because of walls of the box not covered with dry grass or grass-like material? Any takers to find the actual reason?

MIXED BREEDING COLONY OF LITTLE TERN, PAINTED SNIPE, BLACKWINGED STILT AND SMALL INDIAN PRATINCOLE IN MAHARASHTRA. R.M. KASAMBE and J.S. WADATKAR*, M.R. Colony, MIDC Bypass, Amravati 444 606. *P.G. Department of Zoology, Amravati University, Amravati 444 602.

On 5th June 2001, a small breeding colony of 4 species of birds was recorded on a small islet in the Malkhed Reservoir situated near Sawanga (Vithoba) village, which is 18km south-east of Amravati in Maharashtra.

The descriptions are as follows

1. Little tern (*Sterna albifrons*): One nest in a small depression created by a man's foot. Two eggs were seen.
2. Painted snipe (*Rostratula benghalensis*): 3 nests were found, with 1, 4 and 4 eggs in the nests.
3. Blackwinged stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*): 3 nests were found, and each nest had 3 eggs.
4. Small Indian Pratincole (*Glareola lactea*): 7 nests were found.

The number of eggs were two each in 6 nests and 3 in one nest. Besides these 14 nests, we saw another 5 painted snipes, 24 blackwinged stilts and 32 small Indian pratincoles incubating.

The breeding record of little tern in Amravati district (Maharashtra) is the first record in Central India. As per Ali, S. and S.D. Ripley, the nesting is observed in Pakistan and on islands off the West coast of India (Vengurla, Uttara Vashi, etc.).

Reference:

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DR. ALI AND THE "MID-NIGHT JAR", K. JAYARAMAN, Prarthana, 80, 50 Feet Road, NGEF Layout, Sanjaynagar, Bangalore 560094

My mentor and source of inspiration Prof. K.K. Neelakantan, invited me one day to a talk by Dr. Salim Ali in Maharaja's College, Ernakulam, where I was studying first year degree in 1962. After the inspiring talk, he introduced me to the great man, who promptly invited me for a 7 day camp at Chenganoor, Kerala. I did not need a second invitation and I was in the next bus to Chenganoor. We travelled 10 kms from Chenganoor to a village and crossed by boat to another village full of Cane Sugar fields. I do not remember the name of the village. Dr. Ali himself received us (2 students from the college) and impressed me with his down to earth simplicity to make sure that we were comfortable. We stayed in a small house sleeping on the floor, with Dr. sleeping in the open on a foldable camp cot. There were two more zoology students from Bombay working for their Ph.D.

Yellow wagtails were the migratory birds visiting the village in large numbers. In my estimate around 10,000 birds were roosting on the sugar cane fields. The project undertaken by BNHS was to ring them. We used to tie mist nets around the fields and drive the birds from underneath the sugarcane. The birds would fly sideways and get stuck in the nets. Then we would collect them in bags, bring them to camp, insert light aluminium alloy rings in their legs and release them. It was hard work tying the nets early morning around 4 a.m., collecting birds till 10 a.m. The ringing would be completed by noon. We would tie the nets by 4 p.m.

and again collect birds from 6 p.m. till 8 p.m. The ringing would go on till 10 p.m. The hard work, untiring energy and enthusiasm of Dr. at that age (he must have been 60 plus) was to be seen to be believed. One night at around 1 a.m., we were all woken up by Dr. and we had to run behind him half asleep to see a rare night jar whose call Dr. had heard in the night. He showed us the bird high on a tree with his powerful torch. It was an unforgettable experience to spend a few days with the great man. I got hooked to birds for life.

SIGHTING GREYHEADED MYNA (*STURNUS MALABARICUS*) AND RUFIOUS WOODPECKER (*MICROPTERNUS BRACHYURUS*) IN UDUPI. HARISH R. BHAT, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore 560 012.

It was the month of March and I had been to my native Udyavara, which is a small village near Udupi town in Southwestern part of Karnataka, close to the Arabian Sea. One evening, I was taking a stroll in my garden when suddenly my attention was drawn by chattering noises from the trees in our paddy field bund. At first I thought it to be a flock of Indian myna and did not pay much attention to it. But the continuous chattering noise made me doubt whether they were Indian myna as it was not the familiar notes of Indian myna. The curiosity made me take my binoculars and go near them to have a proper glance. To my surprise, the numbers of those birds were near a thousand! The bird was of myna size, with dull grey head and wings, having two conspicuous long black patches on the wings and had a yellow beak. The abdomen was of dull brown colour. Then I could identify them as Grey headed myna (*Sturnus malabaricus*). I had never seen these birds before and that too in such a huge numbers. These small birds were very active, chirping and hopping on the trees. Then suddenly they flew together towards the sky and swarmed in a circle and proceeded towards the south and thus faded from view as dusk approached. The questions still remain unanswered are, whether these birds were migrating locally and are there reports of sighting them in such large numbers.

One early February evening I was taking a stroll, trying to beat the coastal humidity. I heard a familiar sound: toc..toc..toc..trrrrrr.' from the jack fruit tree within our garden. Initially I thought it to be that of a lesser golden backed woodpecker. On closer observation, I could see a dull brown coloured bird about the size of a myna. On careful observation I could see a Rufous woodpecker (*Micropternus brachyurus*). I was delighted, as it is not common in the region.

The bird was busy climbing up with short paces, chipping the bark of the tree. It would tap the tree trunk and move ahead, until it could hear a hollow sound. Then, it would actively chip off the bark. The pieces that were chipped off used to house termites that it would quickly eat. I could observe this behaviour of the woodpecker for an hour. Like a carpenter, it would locate the stronger part of the tree and move further up for the hollow place to chisel the bark pieces off. On the quest for termites, it would hammer with its strong bill, letting it vibrate. This way the hole would easily be drilled further. I observed this behaviour until dusk.

A CRAKE CHAPTER. THEJASWI. S., 639, "Sibia House", 16th Cross, 'B' Block, Vijayanagar, 3rd Stage, Mysore 570 017.

A silent tread, no splashes, nor the slightest 'plop'; a dumpy gait, surprisingly suited for manoeuvres through reed labyrinths; a vigilant and alarmed vision, but when unmolested not without a certain effrontery that it is not usually associated with, or credited to; an unhesitatingly flicked 'stump' tail, a cloak of chestnut-and-slate, a flash of black-and-white...a proximal sound....scurry...vanish. Sleight of hand? : A crane.

Crakes are ubiquitous but do not solicit attention; they confide in silence but vacillate in noise. A denizen of reeds, the crane along

with its larger cousin the rail, and the bittern, is an artist of life in a marsh. Several species inhabit reed beds, hyacinth beds and other swampy undergrowth, paddy fields, forest pools and swamps, mangroves, storm-water drains, even small ponds of neglected quarries. Although most rails and crakes are shy, the colours that clothe these birds: reds, vermillion and chestnut; black, white; blues, slate, sky and aquamarine; defy their choice of run-in-cover tactics.

A crake is best observed early morning. A suitable reed bed, *Typha* for choice, a narrow passage in the reeds, either naturally or created by clearing a few intervening reeds and patience fill the prescription for a good crake watch. If crakes are around they will almost surely come in to the opening, they love to feed in such places. Initial trepidation will slacken and the bird can come really close if the observer remains still. Of all the species of crakes observed, I find the Baillon's crake the most fearless (more so than the omnipresent white-breasted waterhen) and the more common ruddy-breasted crake the most finicky in response to an observer. But a lot also depends on the individual bird, each one differing in the degree of response to an action or perceived threat. The Baillon's crake is a winter visitor, not as uncommon as people think it to be and probably overlooked as most of its cousins usually are. I had a memorable time with this and other crakes last summer when a few birds were regularly observed in reedbeds close to the Lingambudhi lake in the outskirts of Mysore city. The site lies around a kilometre from the Lingambudhi lake, on the overflow channel of the lake. In 2001, sewage water was being directly let into the lake and the resulting runoff had stimulated a luxuriant reed cover in the spill over channel. A marsh was formed where this channel had breached and this unleashed *Typha* into new territories.

The reedbeds in March were witness to a spell of activity. Already, *Pandanus* thickets lined the outlet border in profusion and weaver birds, both baya and streaked, were now vying to establish new breeding colonies in the reeds. A coppersmith pair had set up its brood in a *Pandanus* branch that bore testament to being particularly favoured by previous woodpecker and barbet tenants. One of the several scattered date palms provided a daytime refuge to a spotted owl, with its bobbing head and seditious stares. In a nearby coconut grove, the rare lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*) was incubating the single egg that it had laid. A sealed hole in a coconut tree with a female grey hornbill ensconced within saw regular visitations from the male, usually with an *athi* (*Ficus glomerata*) fig or two. Wisps of pintail snipe, one with a good forty individuals, were stocking up in the wet paddyfields; restless hordes of godwits, sandpipers, including wood, marsh and curlew on passage, spotted redshanks, greenshanks, ruffs and stints rose and fell; all in anticipation of the long journey back north. Warblers had transformed from those skinny birds that we see in September-October to egregiously lumpy creatures, and continued to load on more food even after being apparently stuffed up to the hilt! Chestnut and yellow bitterns surreptitiously clambered along the reeds. The wren-warblers of the locality (Prinias to be acceptably correct), were busy assuaging vociferous demands of their respective clutches. Male koels were in amorous pursuit of females in the accepted rule of the season. Calls of ioras, orioles, sunbirds, barbets, woodpeckers, hornbills, parakeets, minivets, bulbuls, bushchats and robins, mynas, bushlarks, skylarks, pipits and sunbirds rent the air. In this atmosphere ordinary birding would be exciting, providing unmatched opportunities so close to, and partly as a result of, the urban sprawl.

It was on a cloudy morning to the end of this March last year that I received a phone call from Mr. Shivaprakash, my favourite fellow-birder, constant field companion for the last six years and a habitué of the Lingambudhi lake, that he had seen a crake, in addition to the ruddy-breasted and brown crakes that normally inhabit the area, that he could not identify for certain. The next day we

reached the reeds at 0515 hrs, early for good measure, and took up positions close to where he had seen the bird the previous day. A low pressure depression in the Bay of Bengal resulting in gloomy skies kindled hopes of a good session with the crakes. Dawn advanced drawing out with it the loud "tewnk's" of several ruddy-breasted crakes, and sure enough, a pudgy, nervous little bird sauntered in from the reeds. After apparently making sure that our presence was not a predacious one it began feeding nonchalant, by pecking at fallen reeds for insects. We could discern pearly white spots on the back laid on rich brown, salty grey underparts up to the upper belly, bold back-and-white bars on the lower belly and vent, extending into the flanks and a yellow beak, all characters pointing to the Baillon's crake. I had observed this crake several times before, particularly at similar reedbeds in a storm-water drain closer to home, and could thus easily recognise it. It kept to this particular opening and rarely ventured out in the open between thick short grass growing in the slush. The bird was given to sudden, seemingly unreasonable dashes in to the reed cover, despite both of us keeping absolutely still and silent. It would either run away as was custom, or fly off in to neighbouring reedbeds. The returns of the bird to the patch, barring a few exceptions, were almost always by a 'burring' flight. A clear white trailing edge to the wing could be seen, although this would not be visible from a distance, and would appear as a series of neatly arranged, large white teardrops (rather the size of an elephant's teardrop!) on the back, where the secondaries are reposed at rest. These were apart from the smaller white spots that were present on the upper back. The bird gave us a delightful three hours of darts, ducks and close-ups before taking to the reeds after the sun reluctantly peeped through the clouds.

The bird was as confiding the next day, the day after that and up to the end of the first week of April when it suddenly went 'missing'. In the meanwhile, we had managed to locate four other Baillon's crakes along a meandering 500 metre stretch of the channel, but all of them departed within a couple of days of each other. In the span of a few days we had grown attached to these indefatigable tail-flickers, particularly the original bird that turned out to be to us, a first among equals. Not so the ruddy-breasted crakes. These birds are quite vocal and while the Baillon's was heard only a few times, they kept calling intermittently throughout the day, more so at dawn and dusk. They were, are, very retiring birds. But in comparison with the Baillon's this bird was observed to venture out easily to more open portions of the marsh. One crake of this species was seen clambering on to a single *Typha* reed and calling from atop in the manner of the white-breasted waterhen. The remarkable fact was that the bird could go almost right to the top without faltering; the tenacity of the reed, a leaf of *Typha* not the stronger flowering stem, to sustain the weight of a crake while it otherwise bends over on the weight of a weaver bird landing, was surprising.

The *Handbook* gives the breeding season of the southern race of this species from June to September, usually after setting of the SW monsoon. But birds have been observed with chicks in March and April, suggesting an extension of the breeding season, although the majority breed during the rains. They defend territories, ranging from a few tens to a few hundred square metres depending on the availability of suitable habitat, and do not tolerate infringements. Vocal assertions are common, so are the more vocal fights. A pair usually raises three to five young; all hesitating individuals right from early days, possessing perhaps an atavistic quality that has persisted over millions of years of evolution, for the rail family is known from antiquity.

The ruddy-breasted crake is a distinct bird, with a deep chestnut breast and belly, rich brown upperparts, chestnut-and-white barring in the lower abdomen and vent and striking red legs. The brown crake on the other hand is soberly attired in an olive-brown and grey plumage and is often passed over as a juvenile waterhen, despite it lacking the chestnut vent and bright yellow-green legs

of the latter. I remember a brown crane that played truant in fading light one day; the bird would dart in and out of the reeds in frenzy, apparently chasing something, and never allowed me more than a fleeting glimpse of brown and brown. After half an hour in diminishing light and what seemed to me then a belligerent bird, I rose in a huff and prepared to leave. And lo! The bird rushed straight to me and ran between my legs, giving me the fright of my life! I let out a shout and turned around. The startled bird froze a moment, just sufficient for me to recollect and have an adequate look at it, and then realising that something was amiss, bolted into the reeds. I should like to meet that Brown Crane once more and ask of it the reason for running into me like that! I have also seen a brown crane by the road far away from water with three chicks, near Kadur in the Chikmagalur district of Karnataka. On a query, villagers tending cattle nearby informed me that the nearest water-body is a small temple pond two km away! White-breasted waterhens are more often seen away from water, in vegetated borders of dry fields.

Another reserved member of the rail family is the blue-breasted rail (*Gallirallus striatus*), a striking bird but usually quiet and timid. I have not come across this bird often and when I did it was never more than a passing glimpse. Mr. Shivaprakash informs me that he once saw the bird up close, when he was crouching behind a bush observing the nest building activities of a Magpie-Robin; the bird appeared suddenly on the edge of the paddyfields, close to a bund with bushes, and then proceeded to peck at the somewhat scanty remains of a dead crab. He was captivated by the bird's colours, he recounts, the vermilion red crown and nape, the contrasting slaty blue chest, the lightly barred upperparts and deeply barred underparts that made him abandon at once the nesting magpie-robin for the rail!

The kora, also known as the watercock is perhaps the most unobtrusive of all the rails and cranes. A crepuscular bird, it is rarely seen but more often heard, especially during the breeding season. It is more frequent in lowlands than higher elevations, the Gangetic plains and delta of West Bengal and Bangladesh, the Brahmaputra plains in Assam and the marshes, coastal backwaters and 'Kole' wetlands of Kerala and is accordingly rare on the peninsular plateau. I treasure a memorable meeting with the Kora a year and a half back. It was sundown of 10 December 2000 as we trudged back to the bus-stop after an exhausting but exhilarating day with waders in the large floodplain marshes of the Kaveri river in the Krishnarajasagar dam backwaters. There had been Eurasian curlews, comb ducks, several thousand waders mainly little and temminck's stints, ruffs, golden plovers, greater spotted eagles, hundreds of brown-headed gulls, terns and many more interesting birds. My fellow-birder Mohan's native village was nearby and he wanted to visit his grandfather who was supervising work in paddy fields. I could not walk any more, after having sprained an ankle while attempting to negotiate a wide channel of water that I knew I could not cross, and was installed rather ceremoniously on a platform beneath an *arali* (*Ficus religiosa*) tree that faced a small, derelict tank overgrown by *Typha* and *Salvinia*. A tar road passes through that tank and splits it into two irregular portions. I was occupied in self-deprecation at having the sprain when I espied a large brown

bird that ran from one part of the lake to the other, crossing the road in the process. It stood alert awhile in the reeds and over the next fifteen minutes sporadically raised its head to check if everything was OK. It was a kora, a male in non-breeding dress. It grew completely dark by the time my friends Mohan and Keshav returned and I narrated the encounter with the kora, resulting in a flood of recrimination about them being only at a shouting distance away and not being shown the bird. I rather doubt if the bird would have remained hanging around after a couple of loud cries that would be sufficient to scare away even the most tolerant crane or any other bird, with the possible exceptions of the crow and the myna, let alone a kora.

Narasambudhi lake (12°05'N, 76°43'E) is a huge irrigation tank built on the Gundal river, a tributary of the Kabini. It is situated 27 km south of Mysore, close to the temple town of Nanjangud and has a water-spread area of some 800 hectares. It is an excellent birding area, with wetlands, drylands and groves; a hundred species in four hours on a winter morning is the usual count including hundreds of bar-headed geese, a couple of thousand glossy ibis, several thousand duck, pintail mostly, also garganey, shoveler and wigeon, waders, greater spotted eagle and peregrine falcon. On a visit to this lake on 9 December 2001, we even spotted a grey bushchat (*Saxicola ferrea*), the first record of the bird from south India. On the same day, while walking on the bund of the Tagadur Ramachandra Rao canal near the lake, Mr. Shivaprakash came across a dead crane lying on the road and beckoned to us. It was overall brown, darker above and lighter below, generously spotted white on the chest, sides of neck and conspicuous white barring on the flanks and wings. The Grimmskipps guide confirmed it to be a juvenile spotted crane (*Porzana porzana*). The spotted crane is a rare winter visitor to south India, being known only from a handful of records. We had observed it only once before, at the Hosabudanur lake near Mandya in 1994.

I return to the Lingambudhi overflow marsh site as I draw this crane chapter to a close. It is now March 2002. The sewage has stopped, fortunately for the lake, and so the marsh is no more in existence. The reeds were indiscriminately cut in the intervening period; many baya and streaked weaver nests, some with chicks, were just thrown away by the reed cutters, many more destroyed by farmers in the vicinity who explained it away to the weaver being a pest to ripening paddy. The bayas have suffered several successive losses of nesting sites in recent years to a ring road and new layouts and are on slow retreat from the area. The nest of the lesser spotted eagle had collapsed during a bad storm but fortunately the chick had grown, survived the ordeal and we saw it fly away one day. The coconut grove where it nested has been bought by a private developer and would be cleared, probably in a couple of years. Several date palms had been brought down and many smaller ones, regularly stripped of leaves for brooms, looked bald and sullen. A bright new board proclaiming the establishment of a new bank housing colony is yet another stamp of looming urban development. The overflow channel will in all probability be converted into a drain that it partly served as until the sewage was diverted. But there will be a distinction; a rushing, paved drain would no longer support the diversity that the original overflow channel did. The cranes will be gone and so would the birdwatcher.

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Cover : Female **Tickell's Blue Flycatcher** (*Cyornis tickelliae*) at nest. This graceful blue coloured flycatcher prefers to build its nest in thick cover and shade and on the wooded banks of streams. It continually sings a merry little song and flits about the bushes. Its population has declined drastically due to habitat loss.

Photo : S. Shreyas.

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Editorial

Species and Sub-species

I have written earlier that the Newsletter would avoid getting into the problem of sub-species as a general policy. We have enough species to enjoy and worry about. Why split hairs unnecessarily?

However, in this issue you will see a very worthwhile article by Bharat Bhushan on the subject of sub-species. But what he really emphasises is the importance of looking at birds, even common birds, carefully and thus enjoying them all the more.

Rather unexpectedly I received a letter from Edward Dickenson as a result of correspondence initiated by Kumar Ghorpade. Dickenson is connected with the National Museum of Natural

History of the Netherlands, and has been “very busy editing and completely revising and updating the Harvard and Moore check lists of birds of the world, a work that includes sub-species”. He has been exploring the possibility of producing a Handbook of Asian Birds which at the moment has been held up because of lack of funds. I quote some portions of his letter which may be of interest to our readers :

“Taxonomy has been a highly neglected subject in ornithology for years. Only this week I heard that a new sub-species had been described in Pacific Science by Jared Diamond earlier this year, because *The Emu* rejected his paper on the ground that it did not now publish papers on taxonomy!.....

I do share a couple of core views that Kumar has expressed. First, the quality of taxonomic work on Asian birds including Indian birds, has been patchy, and a lot remains to be done. Second, in the course of the last 60 years the trend towards lumping has created species that are sometimes ill-conceived and genera that needs splitting.. Kumar is almost certainly right in thinking that a good few birds that have populations in Peninsular India that are separated by huge range gaps from the forms of the Himalayas and South East Asia deserve studying with a view to showing that differentiation has occurred to the point when specific recognition could be justified.

What is undeniable now compared to the middle of the last century is that we have more “tools” available to assess relationships, some of these may be helpful in the context of separated allopatric (having different areas of distribution taxa). Perhaps the first to come to mind is song: there is a body of acoustic evidence that is convincing in some cases although there is much to learn about song dialect and about the pitfalls of playback experiments and judgements made thereupon.

The next to come to mind is molecular study: this, I believe, is unquestionably useful in terms of sorting out family relationships, genetic evaluation and in the context of species and sub-species for documenting the situation in cases of sympathy (with areas of distribution which coincide or overlap) and parapatry where clear but small differences in genetic make-up should be meaningful.

“The third area for evidence to emerge is colour diagnosis: spectrometers now allow us to see plumage in ways that we do not normally see it but that birds may. If there are really distinctions here that would seem likely to affect mate selection then clearly the evidence needs to be put forward.” Perhaps I am wrong in having a bias against sub-species.

The small green bee-eaters (*Merops orientalis*)

In his fascinating article in The Hindu (1.9.02) Theodore Baskaran makes a comment which is worth pursuing. Writing about a nesting pair of small bee-eaters (formerly named Indian small green bee-eater) he says:

“Bee- eaters have worked out a foolproof security system for the nest. When one bird goes into the tunnel with food for the nestlings, the other sits near the mouth of the tunnel and keeps up a distinct call which seems to tell the bird inside that everything is alright outside. In the face of danger, the sentry flies away and the call stops. The bird inside senses danger and rushes out. They both return when the threat has passed.” Do other species also follow this security strategy?

The Annual Gathering of Subscribers and Supporters of the Newsletter for Birdwatchers.

We plan to meet at Dodda Gubbi on Sunday, 19th January 2003. As usual Major & Dr. Mrs. B.M. Appachu have placed their farm and facilities at our disposal.

Please see the note appended with this issue.



On the Identification of the Mahratta Myna *Acridotheres fuscus mahrattensis* (Sykes)

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Did you know that there is a Mahratta Myna? Most birders know about the Mahratta or the yellowfronted pied woodpecker *Picoides mahrattensis* (Latham) now known as the yellow-crowned woodpecker *Dendrocopus mahrattensis*. There is also the Sind or Syke's nightjar *Caprimulgus mahrattensis*. The mahratta woodpecker is not a true Maratha, being found widespread east of the Indus River. The Sind nightjar ranges from Afghanistan through Pakistan, western India through the Deccan to Mysore, and cannot be considered to be a Mahratta. The Southern jungle myna or the Mahratta myna however has never been considered to be worthy to be a Maratha.

The species was described from collections in the Western ghats near Pune and thus received its initial name, *Pastor mahrattensis*. Colonel Sykes described the mahratta Myna in 1832 initially as a separate species in the proceedings of the Zoological Society of London (Sykes 1832 a). He seems to have also described for science in the same year, i.e., 1832, the sind nightjar *Caprimulgus mahrattensis* (Sykes 1832b). Sykes was one of the first group of serious field workers in ornithology in the Indian Subcontinent, along with Adams, Franklin, Hutton, McClelland, Tickell and Tytler. During the first six decades of the nineteenth century, this group had peers such as T.C. Jerdon, Brian Hodgson and Edward Blyth (Ali and Ripley 1983). Apart from the birdskin collections of A.O. Hume, vast collections such as those of Col. Sykes, the Marquis of Tweeddale (Viscount Walden), and Mr. John Gould, are now housed in the British Museum collection of Indian Birds. Colonel William Henry Sykes was a remarkable naturalist and an excellent birder. I hope to write about him in a future manuscript.

The Mahratta myna is now a subspecies of the much better known jungle myna, *Acridotheres fuscus*. The nominate subspecies was described only five years earlier in 1827 by Wagler as *Pastor fuscus* (Wagler 1827). Subsequently *Pastor mahrattensis* was listed as *Acridotheres fuscus mahrattensis* (Table 1: Key to *Acridotheres tristis* and *A. fuscus* and their subspecies). For purposes of the discussion in this document, I shall refer to the Southern jungle myna as the Mahratta myna, and I hope that the name stays in the future.

The mystery of the ability to identify the Mahratta myna lies in the paradox of wanting to distinguish the species separately from the common myna *Acridotheres tristis* (Table 2: Comparative characteristics of *Acridotheres tristis* and *A. fuscus*). Now who cannot identify the common myna? Any beginner can do so. Even, blindfolded. True, its call is characteristic, and one of the best known of all through the Indian subcontinent. And if other documents are to be referred to, the bird is also now feared in the southern nations in Africa and Australia. It has become a pest in most of these regions.

Prakash Gole Prize :

Prakash Gole has donated a Thousand rupees to the Newsletter and with his consent I thought we might award this amount to the author of the best article during 2002. The best is a matter of opinion, and the opinion of the Editor will be announced in the Jan/Feb 2003 issue.

Table 1 : Key to the species and subspecies of *Acridotheres tristis* and *Acridotheres fuscus*, Abstract from the Handbook (Ali and Ripley 1983).



Key to the Species		
A	Sides of head partly bare, Under wingcoverts and axillaries white.	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
B	No bare skin on sides of head. No collar on sides of nest. Base of mandible blackish.	<i>Acridotheres fuscus</i>

Key to the Subspecies of <i>Acridotheres tristis</i> and <i>Acridotheres fuscus</i> (Amadon 1956)		
A.1	Not so dark above; primary-coverts entirely white.	<i>Acridotheres tristis tristis</i>
A.2	Much darker above; primary-coverts half black and half-white.	<i>Acridotheres tristis melanosternus</i>
B.1	Upperparts slaty; iris yellow.	<i>Acridotheres fuscus fuscus</i> and <i>Acridotheres fuscus fumidus</i>
B.1.A	Lighter, particularly on rump, and less smoky on abdomen.	<i>Acridotheres fuscus fuscus</i>
B.1.B	Darker above, more smoky on abdomen.	<i>Acridotheres fuscus fumidus</i>
B.2	Upperparts brown; iris grey, bluish white or pale blue.	<i>Acridotheres fuscus mahrattensis</i>

The problem lies in the fact that most birders seem to be blindfolded when it comes to identifying the Mahratta myna when it is absolutely common, in more numbers, feeding alongside the common myna, and acting like a pest at garbage dumps, hotel waste dumps and market yards. This may perhaps be due to the belief that the Jungle myna should logically be in, where else, the jungle! It should not be popping up regularly in open sighting inside cities. Why would it be called the jungle myna if it were to be commonly found inside cities? How could a forest dwelling bird, as its name signifies, be found commonly at garbage dumps? Distinguishing!

The impact of urban growth around forest areas, especially in hilly terrain, is perhaps the answer to this disconcerting mystery. I have been watching the jungle or Mahratta myna in Pune city since 1996. It seems to occur along with the common myna in the areas around Baner, Pashan, Audh, Raj Bhavan campus and the University of Pune campus. Both the species are seen to occur commonly in these semi-suburban area of Pune west of Shivaji Nagar. I am currently working at the Yeshwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration. The academy has a

Table 2: Comparative description of the field characters and museum diagnosis of Indian myna *Acridotheres tristis tristis* (Handbook No. 1006. Volume 5 pages 177-180), and the southern jungle myna *Acridotheres fuscus mahrattensis* (Handbook No. 1010. Volume 5 pages 185-186)

Description as in the Handbook	Indian myna <i>Acridotheres tristis tristis</i> Handbook Number 1006	Southern Jungle Myna <i>Acridotheres fuscus mahrattensis</i> Handbook Number 1010
Size	Dove : Length c.23 cm (9in)	Myna; length c. 23 cm (9in)
Field Character	Well-groomed dark brown bird with glossy black head and bright yellow legs, bill and a naked patch below and behind eye. A large white patch on the wing conspicuous in flight. Sexes alike.	As on 1009(Northern Jungle Myna) <i>Acridotheres fuscus fuscus</i> Very similar to Indian Myna (1006), also with the large white wing- patch but distinctly greyer brown overall. A prominent tuft of erect black feathers at base of bill on forehead, absence of bare yellow skin around eyes, broadly white-tipped tail and yellow iris are diagnostic clues. Sexes alike.
Young (immature)	Pale edition of adult; duller, less dark brown, with the head ashy brown rather than black.	Like <i>fuscus</i> (1009) but browner above and below. <i>Acridotheres fuscus</i> Young immature = Upperparts brown to greybrown, darkest on head which is not hackled; ear-coverts with pale shafts. Underparts brown with pale mottling on throat; belly and under tail-coverts buffish white. Tail-feathers narrower, dark brown with white tips as in adult. Postjuvinal mouth complete.
		
Museum Diagnosis	Head, neck and upper breast glossy black; rest rich vinous brown, paler and albescent on abdomen. A large white patch at base of dark brown primaries. Tail brownish black with broad white tips to the rectrices.	Differs from the northern (nominate) subspecies in being more brown, less slaty grey on the upperparts and in the colour of the iris: grey or bluish white v. lemon-yellow. <i>Acridotheres fuscus fuscus</i> Museum Diagnosis = Adult. Whole head, lores and ear-coverts black, the feathers of the head hackled. Rest of upperparts cinereous brown becoming greyer with wear. Below, chin, throat and breast dark ashy grey; belly and under tail-coverts buffish white.
Geo-graphical variation	Birds from NW India tend to Paleness, from S. India to darkness.	Not mentioned or specified.
Colour of bare parts	Iris brown or reddish brown mottled with white; Orbital skin bright yellow. Bill yellowish, base of lower mandible brownish green; mouth dark slate. Legs, feet and claws, yellow like bill, paler than orbital skin.	Irish bluish white or grey. Bill orange yellow, dark brown at nostrils, gape and base of lower mandible; mouth dark slate. Legs and feet yellow; claws brown..
		
Other Sub-species	1007. Ceylon Myna <i>Acridotheres tristis melanosternus</i> Legge.	1009, Northern Jungle Myna <i>Acridotheres fuscus</i> (Wagler) 1011. Eastern Jungle Myna <i>Acridotheres fuscus fumidus</i> Ripley

beautiful garden campus, with patches of new lawn landscape interspersed with the original Deccan semi-arid trees of *Zizyphus* and *Acacia* along with Teak and Bamboo. In fact, we have some of the best looking *Zizyphus* trees instead of the usual stunted bush-like apologies that one sees all over the Deccan.

An even more delightful Raj bhavan campus, the Superintendent of Police (Rural) campus and the University of Pune surround the Academy. Further west, the Spicer Memorial College in Aundh has more than 80 acres of trees, agricultural areas and groves, bordered by the Botanical Gardens. Towards the southwest, we have the nearly 200 acre campus of the National Chemical Laboratory before the Pashan road climbs towards the National Defence Academy at Khadakvasla. All in all, a splendid location for birding.

Our campus now has a checklist of more than 100 bird species. The Pashan-Aundh-Baner area could easily present a checklist of more than 150 bird species. Of these, the most common species in our campus include redvented bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*, spotted munia *Lonchura punctula*, magpie robin *Copsychus saularis*, large grey babbler *Turdoides malcolmi*, grey or great tit *Parus major* and purple sunbird *Nectarinia asiatica* among others. Of the mynas in the Pashan-Aundh-Baner area of Pune. I have recorded the common myna, the jungle or Mahratta myna, the brahminy myna *Sturnus pagodarum*, and the rosy pastor *Sturnus roseus*. I have never seen the bank myna *Acridotheres ginginianus*, the pied myna *Sturnus contra* or the Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* in this region during 1996-2002.

The common myna is quite bold within our campus, feeding near the residential areas, entering my office cabin, chattering outside the classrooms, entering houses through open windows or insisting for morsels outside kitchen windows. It is seen to be most aggressive near the open garbage bins against pariah dogs, house crows *Corvus splendens* and crow pheasant *Centropus sinensis* that frequent the spot. The common myna nests in the caves under the sloping tiled roofs of our campus buildings. It can be quite intimidating for the nesting birds, for our tiled roofs are known to house civets, snakes, mongoose and several rats and bandicoots. I have been watching at least four pairs of common mynas successfully raising broods each year since 1996. This year we retiled the roofs and boarded up the caves to prevent the snakes, civets and mongoose from wandering around. The common myna did not nest under the tiled roofs this year I could only spot two pairs successfully nesting behind an unused airconditioner inside a rarely utilised classroom.

Pune city has a number of well known and some not so well known communal roosts of common mynas. One can therefore see flocks of 7-10 common mynas flying in to the inner city and suburbs from the outlying agricultural areas. Some locations such as the Spicer Memorial College campus, the Salisbury Park campus and the Durgadevi Hill Forests are known to have communal roosts of common mynas of more than 2000 birds.

The point is that most birders know the common myna quite commonly in Pune. Some birders know that the evening flocks flying in are going to the roosts. Almost all birders never give a second glance to the flying flocks or the communal roosts as also the mynas seen all over the city. Thus, they do not seem to realise that in some flocks or alongside some, there occurs the Mahratta myna.

Even as I write this manuscript at 1430 hours on 6 August 2002, I can see two Mahratta mynas scampering behind our campus gardeners who have been sweeping up the cut down grass from our lawns. There are another four Mahratta mynas perched on a neem tree next to a tiled roof house inside our campus. These four have been perched on the neem branches over the past 30 minutes and do not seem rushed for foraging. As part of the same picture, within the frame, there are ten common mynas hassling themselves while following the gardeners. The common mynas are flying up almost seeming to compete within themselves in trying to be the first in the queue. The two Mahratta mynas seem to be quite content foraging slowly, digging up the soil with their beaks and picking up something now and then and allowing for it to be swallowed.

Local birders from within the city usually visit me at my office and residence, both inside the campus. There are several *atirathis* and *mahrathi* birders, i.e. experienced and expert birders, in the city. I purposefully seat them in a position where they could watch the feeding areas for the birds visiting my house. When it was almost time for them to depart, I point out the fact that there seemed to be two different mynas feeding in front of us. One seemed to be slimmer, darker, with even more grey-brown wings and without the bright yellow naked patch behind the eye. Would that not be a different species? The expert birder immediately point out the white wing patch on both the myna species and lecture to me on the fact that it was proof enough that both were common mynas.

Most possibly, aggrieved birders from Pune and nearby regions would respond to this manuscript. Some may disclaim my theory that we are not taking the time to separately identify the Mahratta myna from the common myna. Some may agree. It would certainly be worthwhile to see the response and reactions.

What makes the Mahratta myna so indistinguishable from the common myna? I am unable to explain with any degree of certainty. I have tried discussing this problem with birders in other cities. They agree that the jungle myna could be seen inside the cities but do not seem to have spotted the species along with the common myna around garbage dumps, gardens, residential areas, kitchen windows or balconies, vegetable markets and classrooms. Is this a new phenomenon? Has it been seen in cities other than in Pune? Is the jungle myna beginning to be urbanised? Or, simply speaking, have we given it a wrong name?

Just because we have named it the jungle myna should the species restrict its distribution to forests? And more disturbingly, has urban impact on nearby forests become so pronounced that the most opportunistic birds such as mynas, bulbuls have begun to enter cities?

These questions need to be discussed. The perspectives and concerns that the species has highlighted needs to be studied in detail. Within the scope of this manuscript however, I am more concerned by the amazing carelessness being exhibited by the birding community in taking some more time and understanding the fact that however repetitive it may be, each bird needs to be looked at in detail and importantly, with unending curiosity. A birders' credo is to seek knowledge again and again, in looking at each bird, however common it may be. There is a lot of action in the most boring looking flock of house sparrows. Each pair of house crows seems to behave differently. Every sunbird seems to have a different perspective to each flower that it visits. There is something different every single moment with the same species, with the same individual bird, with the same flock and within the same habitat.

Let us all take some more time. Let us enjoy birding a little bit more. Let us not rush it. There was a statement that used to be repeated during 1983-1984 during the Centenary year of the Bombay Natural History Society. "The best things in the world are free, enjoy it while you can." I may not be recollecting this statement accurately. We need to place this statement alongside the famous lines from the poem, "What is this world full of care, we have no time to stand and stare". It would then definitely indicate to birders everywhere that birdwatching can be enjoyed that much more only if we regard each bird as something different to look at, different to be observed, different to be identified.

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A brief visit was made to the Talakona area of the Sri Venkateswara National Park near Tirupati in the Chittoor district of A.P. during 24-25 August 2002, as part of an educational tour for the Biology Students of class 12 of Rishi Valley School. I have visited other parts of the National park such as the Pulibonu area and Kalyani Dam, Mamandur etc., since 1980 and have always enjoyed watching birds in these forests. Having heard about the unique vegetation of the Talakona area, I had been longing to visit it and explore its bird-life.

Located about 25 km. from Bakrapet, a small village on the Tirupati – Madanapalle road, Talakona is on the northwestern

A Visit to the Talakona Forest

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part of the National Park which is some 353 km² in area. The forest commences as one approaches Talakona from Nerabailu village, some 7 km. ahead of the Siddeswara temple. Initially the forest is nothing more than a degraded scrub but as we go in along the road we begin to see better preserved dry deciduous forest, having *Terminalia* spp., *Santalum*, *Pterocarpus* (red sanders), *Chloroxylon*, *Phoenix*, bamboos, etc. There is a dramatic change in the vegetation along the riverine area where the trees assume gigantic proportions as compared with the adjacent dry deciduous forest that has smaller and less dense vegetation. Here in the gallery forests, trees are well over 100-120 ft (30-35 m.) in height and have large girths. An

exceptionally large tree we measured had a diameter of 56 inches (c. 140 cm.). This forest-type, which came close to the moist deciduous type in its physiognomy as well as its floristics, has several species of trees distinct from the dry forests. Wild mango (*Mangifera indica*) is the most common tree. Among other trees seen here are *Shorea* spp. (a few were supposedly planted several years ago by the Britishers), *Syzigium alternifolium*, *Ficus* spp. and *Dillenia pentagyna*. A notable feature of the forest here is the presence of the woody climber or liana – *Entada scandens*. A plant of truly gigantic proportions, this plant grows on the trees and in some places we could see trees that were unable to bear their enormous weight, brought down to the ground along with parts of the liana. Only dead stumps of these trees remain, in a high state of decay. The undergrowth is fairly dense in patches in the gallery forest though open in some parts. *Helicteres isora* is a common shrub.

The gallery forest is a narrow belt along the river and not wider than some 5-600 m. at the widest point. The river was in flow though the volume was very low due to the erratic monsoon rains. From the temple the road becomes rough and runs to the base of the near vertical cliff-face and terminates. From here one has to walk a kilometer along the river to reach the 'kona' or the waterfall. A truly spectacular cascade in rainy season, it was now reduced to a small, narrow ribbon of water. The exposed rocks of the cliffs are also very picturesque, giving an ancient look to the narrow valleys. Walking along the stream beds, one could view the geological and biological sights with fascination. The flaky rocks, vertical as a wall with symmetrically carved step-like formations with water flowing down and supporting ferns and herbs, the tall magnificent trees with lianas with their enormous pods, nearly a meter in length at times, the delicately built spider webs glistening in the sunlight, the calls of a multitude of birds are all part of fondly cherished memories that will linger on for a long time to come.

The vegetation being strongly reminiscent of the forests of Western Ghats, it was not surprising that the fauna it supported also had some elements from this area. The giant squirrels were seen commonly on the trees, though they appeared to be somewhat smaller and less bright than those I have seen in the Western Ghats. They were less shy and more easily approachable. Among birds there were the yellow-browed bulbul, the green imperial pigeon, the quaker babbler and the grey-fronted green pigeon, which one associates closely with the forests of the W. Ghats. Perhaps there were several other species too but to document their presence one needs more than the few hours that were at my disposal. In fact, I could manage to document only 48 species of birds on this visit. The visibility was certainly low in the gallery forest and with a garrulous group of teenagers around, it was certainly impossible to hear all the birdcalls.

The birds in the gallery forests appeared to be either concentrated in the fruiting jamun (*Syzigium*) trees or moving about in mixed hunting flocks. The assemblage on the former included the

grey-fronted green pigeon, tree-pie, large green barbet, red-vented, red-whiskered and the yellow-browed bulbuls, the gold-mantled chloropsis and a few others. In the mixed flocks, there were white-bellied drongos, black-headed orioles, slaty-headed scimitar babblers, monarch, tickell's blue, white-spotted fantail and paradise flycatchers, quaker babblers, small minivets, white-browed and yellow-browed bulbuls. These were occasionally joined by the black-backed and lesser golden-backed woodpeckers. The drongo appeared to be at the centre of the flock and by following its movements the rest of the birds could be spotted. It was usually seen in the lower to mid-canopy heights. The flycatchers too were at the same levels. The fantail flycatcher was seen taking insects from the tree-trunks. The quaker babblers were foraging at lower heights, among the shrubs and at times as low as a few inches above the ground. The bulbuls and the orioles were at higher levels, amongst the foliage. I got to see a single green imperial pigeon fly past and later located two more high up in the canopy. Their deep calls were also heard briefly.

Large cuckoo-shrikes kept to family parties and up to four birds were seen together and appeared to be engaged in courtship displays. The large green barbets were constantly heard from among the tree-tops. The coppersmith barbet was relatively less often encountered. Spotted babbler and jungle babblers were also noticed. It was a delight to hear the shama's call-notes and 2-3 birds were briefly glimpsed. The other notable birds seen on the trip were the white-throated ground thrush, an adult bird followed by a juvenile that was fed by the former, a lovely specimen of the black eagle soaring effortlessly above the canopy, the yellow-throated bulbul, our endemic bird from this region, common grey hornbill, a brown flycatcher and a pair of gold-fronted chloropsis of which I had only a brief look and hence not too sure of. The river had very few birds apart from the small blue and white-breasted kingfishers. I had faintly heard the call of the Indian cuckoo once from a little distance away. There were of course the other birds like the common lora, brown wood-shrike, tailorbird, rose-ringed and blossom-headed parakeets, purple-rumped sunbird, coucal, Indian robin, tickell's flowerpecker, spotted dove and franklin's prinia from the dry deciduous forest. But I really missed a few others such as the grey jungle fowl and owls (especially the brown fish owl) that I had hoped to see here.

The Talakona area has much to offer to the serious birdwatchers. It is a pity that very little is known of its rich birdlife. There could be surprises here as in the case of the yellow-browed bulbul and grey-fronted green pigeon – species till recently not reported from the Eastern Ghats. There is accommodation at Talakona, run by the AP Tourism as well as the Forest Department, though there are few takers due to the naxalite activities. This incidentally is keeping the tourist population here at lower levels and reducing the level of disturbance. Even so plastics and paper could be seen littered all over the place. Steps must be taken to tackle this menace to maintain the pristine beauty of this lovely forest.



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Macro and Micro Ecosystems

Innumerable sanctuaries and National Parks have been created in the country for preserving wild animals, birds and vegetation. These extend over hundreds of hectares; and are situated far away from human populated areas. Happily these serve as a repository of biodiversity. They may be addressed as macro habitats and ecosystems for certain wildlife and plants. All the same we come across pockets or niches, may be a single tree, a small group of vegetation, small rocks or big boulders, even river and other water courses, where small animals and birds are seen breeding. These may be the micro habitats, which form miniature eco-systems for certain animals and birds to survive and breed. Such niches and solitary trees or rocks also need protection for the survival of the species.

Among the trees, scientists consider Ficus trees (Fig species) as 'Keystone species', the species that have large ramifying effects on the ecosystem through direct and indirect pathways. These are the species which control the structure and function of a community of animals. Like a keystone supporting an archway, keystone plants like various Ficus species bear fruits all year round, and so support a broad spectrum of frugivorous birds and animals during times of scarcity of food. In an observation two different species of squirrels and about twenty different species of birds were seen on a 'Gonimara' (*Ficus mysorensis*), when in fruit. Extinction of keystone species is likely to cause major changes in the composition of species. A group of Ficus trees of various species offer fruits for animals and birds spread over several months. These serve as super-markets for these animals, where they get various types of frugivorous food as at a single super-market people get all their requirements. Hence it is environmentally necessary to maintain viable flowering (nectar bearing) and fruiting (edible) populations of plant species for the health of biodiversity, both in the rural (including forests) and urban environs.

Against this background, orders have been recently issued to preserve all the Ficus trees found growing in Bangalore, thanks to years of efforts of our editor Zafar Futehally. This will go a long way in preserving the bird-diversity of the city.

In forest areas rich populations of frugivorous bird species frequent Ficus trees like *F. mysorensis* (Gonimara), *F. glomerata* (Country fig), *F. Tsiela* (Piperi), *F. religiosa* (Peepal), and even *F. benghalensis*, the last if found wild at the fringes. Ficus trees are normally considered to be infectious to other valuable species like Teak by the forest officials and are cut down. But in view of their importance to biodiversity, they need to be preserved. Some of these trees growing to giant size in the forests individually support birds, animals, wild beehives etc. to breed and multiply. I have observed a pair of the lesser adjutant-stork nesting (this need not be taken as the same pair, but a single pair only breeds here) since the last thirty years on a giant tree growing at the edge of the ancient Bisalavadi water-hole at the Nagarahole National Park of Karnataka.

Occasionally many ancient giant Ficus trees found planted outside our forests on the roadsides serve as micro-nesting places for the birds. There is a *Ficus religiosa* tree (Peepal) at Mattikere, on the Bangalore-Mysore road, on which grey herons and little

cormorants nest year after year. Different species of owls are observed breeding in the hollows of the ancient trees of Ficus, Tamarind, Neem, Mohwa, Jamun etc planted as avenue trees along the highways and other ancient roads of our country, many of which are being axed down during the upgradation of roads to four and six lanes of 623 km. length coming under the Golden Quadrilateral Project of the Central Govt. The parakeets, especially the rose-ringed ones, and the barbets are observed residing and breeding in several holes made on the older trees in the vicinity of villages as well.

At the Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary Fruit Bats yearly breed in hundreds on the same 3-4 giant trees of *Ficus benghalensis* along with other nesting birds. At this sanctuary cliff swallows are also observed nesting in hundreds on a single rock since several decades.

I have observed and photographed a pair of the common hoopoe using the same nesting hole of a low-growing tree in the compound of the Deputy Conservator of Forests at Mysore. This will continue, if no disturbance is caused to the birds.

It is quite natural for most of the bird-watchers to go for birding to some common larger trees, especially fruit bearing trees, where on a single tree they observe a large congregation of birds of various species like the mynas, bulbuls, parakeets, drongos, barbets, hornbills etc. Some trees, specially the giant and taller ones, are utilised as the roosting places for a large number of birds. In the evenings a large gathering of noisy birds is observed on such trees to the delight of the birdwatchers. Even water and wader birds have community roosting on certain selected trees, either in rural or urban areas, year after year, if disturbance is not caused. Birdwatchers should have also observed the raptors selecting the same trees for roosting, breeding or predating over the years.

At the Gund and Magod forests of Uttara Kannada District the great hornbills nest on the same tall giant trees every year. At the Anaimallai Sanctuary of Tamilnadu the great hornbills breed on tall giant trees and mostly feed on wild Ficus fruits. Likewise the Malabar grey hornbill, the Malabar pied hornbill and the great black woodpeckers are seen occupying certain niches in the reserved forests, which do not come under the Sanctuaries.

Along some riverbanks, streams and tanks kingfishers like the stork-billed kingfisher, the lesser pied kingfisher the small blue kingfisher etc. are seen breeding in the same holes over the years. There are rocks in the rivers surrounded by water that are used by river terns and great stone plovers for annual nesting.

Purple sunbirds affect the scrub country around even cities and are observed nesting on the dwarf *Acacia* plants covered with the social spider-cobwebs.

I have recorded a few sightings of the forest habitats, individual trees, groups of vegetation, rocks and boulders, river and stream banks, watercourses etc. which are being used by birds and animals as sites for breeding. Most of these fall outside the Protected Areas, which also need listing and protection against human-destruction. Our bird-watching friends should have spotted such sites of breeding, which need proper listing.



Status of Vultures in Etawah and Mainpuri Districts, Uttar Pradesh, India

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Vulture declines have been cataclysmic in their proportions in several areas in India in the recent past. I had the opportunity to watch four species of vultures in the districts of Etawah and Mainpuri Districts, Uttar Pradesh, in north-central India.

This article documents semi-qualitative information on the status of these vultures in these two districts based on my observations between September 1999 to July 2002. These two districts have been under-explored for birds in the recent past, and reports of vultures in particular from this area have been few (Birdlife International 2000).

Fieldwork was conducted at the border of the two districts encompassing the towns of Etawah, Karhal, Saman, Sarsai nawar and Baralokpur. I travelled a route of approximately 250 km in length 5-7 times a week, and all observations were opportunistic. In addition, I conducted a survey of birds in the National Chambal Sanctuary in February 2002 at the request of the Forest Department and the numbers of vultures sighted were recorded; part of Agra district was covered during this survey. Sight records and relevant comments for the four species for the two districts and those recorded during the survey in Agra are presented in Table 1 and discussed species - wise below.

Scavenger vultures *Neophron percnopterus* Scavenger vultures were common in the area and could be frequently spotted in the countryside. Only records of unusually large flocks and numbers in the National Chambal Sanctuary during the bird survey are mentioned in Table 1. Breeding was prolific and occurred principally on the ledges of the ravines of the Chambal and Yamuna rivers, though several nests active on trees along main roads were recorded. Sightings of several juveniles with flocks indicated high rates and good success in breeding of the species in the area (see Table 1). They were attracted to soft-shelled turtle *Lissemys punctata* and monitor lizards *Varanus* sp. kills on roads and were usually the first on the scene, beating crows that are fast becoming the most prominent scavengers in the landscape along with stray dogs. In the northern part of Mainpuri district and in the adjoining Etah district, scavenger vultures were killed frequently by vehicles as they came down to feed on other animals killed by vehicles on roads. Dogs often chased away scavenger vultures from cattle carcasses thrown by villagers in unused fields, and the vultures were allowed to feed only after the dogs had their fill. No declines were visible for this species which in fact seemed to be increasing as indicated by the large number of juveniles sighted.

White-rumped vulture *Gyps benghalensis* Of the other three species found in the area, individuals of the white-rumped vulture were sighted the most (Table 1). It is now becoming increasingly difficult to spot the species in the districts, the decline seems to have begun towards the end of 1999 or early 2000, and appears to have crashed around mid 2000. (see Table 1). An active nest used to be found on a tree beside the Shiva temple at Sarsai nawar jheel, Etawah district and had been recorded by villagers to be active for the past few decades. This nest was occupied by a pair of woolly-necked storks *Ciconia episcopus* on 20 July 2001 and is symbolic of near disappearance of vultures in the region. A

previously resident, roosting flock around Sarsai Nawar jheel prevalent as recently as January 2001 has also disappeared.

Long-billed vultures *G. indicus* and Red-headed vultures *Sarcogyps calvus* Long-billed *G. indicus* and red-headed vultures *Sarcogyps calvus* were always rare and sight records of these species were mostly in the ravines of the National Chambal Sanctuary where nesting sites also occurred. One nest of a long-billed vulture pair was active near Chakarnagar on the ravines of the National Chambal Sanctuary in June 2001 (R. Chauhan and V.K. Mishra, personal communication, 2001). Two long-billed vultures, one in a nest located on a cliff, probably the same pair seen in June were sighted near Bareh town in the sanctuary in February 2002. Three red-headed vultures were seen together in February 2002 in the sanctuary, while very few individuals were seen outside during the study period. There were no declines visible in the population of these two species.

Discussion

During these observations, the drooping-head phenomenon reported for vultures in Keoladeo Ghana National Park (Prakash 1999), which lies less than 200km west of the study area, was not seen. It would be worthwhile to maintain a continuous vigil on the vultures of the region.

The villagers of the two districts do not directly persecute vultures and application of pesticides in crop fields is restricted. A recent practice has been the direct spraying of large quantities of broad-spectrum pesticides on ponds and lakes while farming water-chestnut (September - January). Previously, naturalists and ecologists used to suspect that run-off from crop fields added pesticides to natural wetlands. Now the direct spraying leaves no doubt that pesticides are contaminating wetlands and the effect on fauna and flora resident in these areas is likely to be immediate and fatal. The cultivation of water-chestnut in this region was restricted in 1999 and 2000, but was observed to expand in an uncontrolled manner from early 2001 onwards, leaving few marshlands and wetlands unaffected. Whether the decline in vulture population in the study area is a consequence of this phenomenon, with the pesticides passing on along the food chain, is anybody's guess, but requires urgent attention.

A direct consequence of the decline of vultures in this predominantly agricultural area has been irresponsible disposal of carcasses of livestock by villagers. Dead cattle previously used to be skinned and dumped in unused fields for vultures to eat them up. The bones then used to be collected to be used in brick kilns and as fertilizer. With the near-disappearance of the *Gyps* vultures, villagers are now increasingly disposing of cattle carcasses by dumping them into canals, a good network of which is prevalent in the two districts, and into the rivers. During fieldwork, I have counted over 150 such carcasses in canals. During visits to the National Chambal Sanctuary in 1999-2001, only a couple of carcasses of cattle were sighted, but during the 2002 survey, I counted 20 cattle, one human and two unidentifiable carcasses in the river. The effects of this unhealthy practice of human health could turn gravely serious if left

unabated. This is an illustration of the reliance of villagers on vultures previously, and the acknowledged and recognized role of these birds as efficient scavengers.

Also, with the disappearance of the larger vultures, dogs and crows will now have an increased supply of food and this will probably result in the growth in numbers of both. Both were seen to be detrimental to the recruitment rate of several large and small water birds that nest on the water or on the ground. While crows were seen to predate on sarus crane *Grus antigone* eggs, dogs were seen to kill pre-fledged sarus young. Eight other species of birds were seen to have their eggs and/or young preyed on by dogs and crows. The impact on the population of scavengers like dogs and crows that also function as predators, due to the decline in vultures has not been a subject of much discussion or interest. At least in this region, several bird species, including one globally threatened species, face increased predation pressures due to secondary effects of decline in vulture numbers. This aspect needs serious consideration by managers and scientists alike.

The rural people of the region, especially the older generation, is acutely aware of the decline in vulture populations. During the 7 Nov. 01 sightings of three white-rumped vultures (Table 1), two villagers from Baralokpur were observed watching the vultures and discussing excitedly if the vultures have begun making a come back. The number of watching villagers grew steadily and was 15 when I rode away.

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Table 1 : Vulture sightings in Etawah and Mainpuri districts, Uttar Pradesh (1999-2000) (NCS National Chambal Sanctuary)

Species/Date	Number	Place of sighting and comments
Scavenger vulture		
14 May 00	c.60	Chakr Nagar, NCS on river bank, with 20 juveniles.
30 Sep 01	26	Near Kudaiyya lake, at cattle carcass, 8 juveniles in flock
07 Nov. 01	51	Off Baralokpur town, at cattle carcass, with White-rumped vultures, two juveniles in flock.
25 Jan. 02	22	NCS survey, Nandgaon to Udi bridge, three juveniles.
26 Jan. 02	8	NCS survey, Udi bridge to Mahua Sunda, three juveniles.
27 Jan. 02	10	NCS survey, Mahua Sunda to Pachnada, two juveniles.
04 Feb. 02	15	NCS survey, Nandgaon to Pinahat
05 Feb. 02	8	NCS survey, Pinahat to Rihan, Agra district
White-rumped vulture		
27 Sep. 99	130+	Bariha town, feeding on cattle carcass on the roadside
27 Dec. 99	2	Sarsai Nawar, on nest, roosting.
23 June 00	45	Sarsai Nawar, soaring + roosting on trees
06 Jan. 01	20	Sarsai Nawar, soaring
10 Jan. 01	35	Sarsai Nawar, soaring + roosting on trees
21 May 01	28	Opposite Sauj Lake, at cattle carcass
17 Aug. 01	1	Sauj Lake, soaring
30 Sep. 01	1	Chopla village, soaring
07 Nov. 01	3	Off Baralokpur town, at cattle carcass
22 Nov. 01	1	Near Baralokpur, on cattle carcass with 4 Scavenger vultures and dogs
Long-billed vulture		
14 May 00	2	NCS, at Chakr Nagar in nest on ravine wall one juvenile
10 Jan. 02	1	Karri town, soaring
27 Jan. 02	2	NCS survey, near Bareh town
Red-headed vulture		
14 Feb. 01	1	Hawai Patti, at Nilgai carcass
18 Apr. 01	1	Near Hardoi Lake, in wasteland
05 Feb. 02	3	NCS survey, Pinahat to Rihan, Agra district

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A Question of Identity - of Bulbuls and Bush Larks

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Howard Corvath of Oregon (U.S.A.) sighted the rare, endemic, yellow-throated bulbul (*Pycnonotus xantholaemus* Jerdon, SYNOPSIS # 1135) amongst the scrub-and-boulder country around the famous ruins of the Vijayanagar Empire at Hampi, near Hospet, in north Karnataka's Bellary District (*NLBW* 42: 84-86; 2002). The *INDIAN HANDBOOK* (6: 94-95 & 9: pl. 100), as I have found it, is not very accurate or complete, but is still the best "summary" of Indian region birds, and readily available. It is astonishing to find however that it tells us very little of juvenile plumages and of nidification (breeding and nesting), other than data copied from the *NEW FAUNA* of Stuart Baker (1922—1930)

on breeding season, nest location, materials and structure, besides the number, size and colour of eggs. The "variant" of the YTB that Howard saw could have only been a juvenile, whose plumage details are not recorded in our reference books. The plates in the "Grimskipps" *POCKET GUIDE* (pl. 117) and in Kazmierczak's *FIELD GUIDE* (pl. 65), compared with R.A. Richardson's fine painting in the *INDIAN HANDBOOK* (5: pl. 100), are all at variance (!), like most other birds illustrated by these paintings. The *INDIAN HANDBOOK* says that the iris (eye) of the YTB is "brown or orange brown," but the *NEW FAUNA* puts it down as "bright red". Richardson's *INDIAN HANDBOOK*

plate has it red but the others have the eye dark! Only Carl D'Silva's plate in the POCKET GUIDE shows the yellow tail tip and he and Ber van Perlo show the legs and feet black but Richardson has them light grey! This is the problem with paintings, therefore, I see a great future ahead for illustrated bird field guides using good colour photographs, which I plan to select and include myself, when I am ready with synoptic, updated, bird recognition guides for each biogeographical (not political!) area, or sub-area. Incidentally, a good book that wildlife photographers may benefit from consulting is A. A. Baker's (1965) "Photography for scientific publication—A Handbook," published by E.H. Freeman & Co., San Francisco (U.S.A.). I do not know if this Hampi ruins record of the YTB is the first ever from this spot but it is encouraging. And Howard's 78 species in 8 days at Hampi is a little disappointing because I myself saw almost 50 bird species in a single morning's walk in May this year. Perhaps I worked in much better undisturbed habitat across the northern side of the River Tungabhadra. But good work, Howard, and I would be most interested in your bird list from Hampi, and at other places along your Goa to Rollapadu travel "route."

In my paper on the Ornithology of Sandur (1974, *JBNHS* 70: 522-523) I had mentioned early records of the YTB from rocky hills near Bellary in June 1901 by C.L. Wilson, and then from Ramandrug hill top on the Sandur Hills by E.H. Pooler in May 1919. The YTB is a primitive bulbul species, with African relatives of Gondwanan ancestry, and should occur in such dry scrub-and-boulder country all over the Eastern Ghats—Carnatic sub-area (MP+RA+KT; see my Map in Pitta # 122-123: 4; 2001), and may also occur in the Deccan Plateau (BD+TG) sub-area as well, all south of the Tapti—Godavari rivers geographical barrier. The NEW SYNOPSIS, by the way, cited only 18 species of our bulbuls, placed in just 3 genera: *Pycnonotus*, *Criniger* and *Hypsipetes*. In a recent communication of mine to Edward Dickinson (who has apparently completed his manuscript revising the 1984 WORLD CHECKLIST of Howard & Moore and is now working with Rene Dekker, and others, on Asian birds for an intended multi-volume work), I have indicated that a possible maximum of 44 real species of Indian region bulbuls (more if Burma is also included as it should rightly be) may truly exist here and are better placed in 14 distinct genera (homogeneous species-groups). These are the kinds of detailed scientific revisions of our birds' species limits and generic groupings which require to be done urgently. We certainly have many more true species, and endemic, than Sâlim Ali & Ripley had us believe.

Prakash Gole, whose work on the Sahyadris around Poona is well-known, has now thankfully turned his eyes to the "dry hills"—Deccan Plateau ecosystem—around his hometown (*NLBW* 42: 87). Yes, this is the area that has not been surveyed and documented properly still, after the pioneering works of Sykes to Jerdon to Fairbank to Davidson & Wenden to Butler to Macgregor, from 1832 to 1887. Dr Anil Mahabal of the Zoological Survey of India, which has a regional station at Akurdi just outside Poona, has written fine papers on the avifaunas of Poona, Sholapur and Dhulia Districts. Mrs Wright did a paper on the birds of berar in 1942 and all these persons mention only *Mirafra*

erythroptera (# 877), the red-winged bush lark (not "Indian" as recent nomenclature confuses us!). Abdulali's Maharashtra check-list gives also *Mirafra cantillans*, the singing bush lark, but that is easily distinguishable by its almost unspotted upper breast and lack of "floating" down from the air at the end of its song flight. The "Madras Bush Lark" (*M. affinis*) is very similar but has not been found in north-western peninsular India where Maharashtra is located. Per Alström (1998, Forktail, 13: 97-107) discussed the identities of some *Mirafra* larks, but my own research indicates that there may be as many as a dozen distinct species of *Mirafra* here and not just three as documented in the INDIAN HANDBOOK, NEW SYNOPSIS and recent guides. Very unsatisfactory, hardly detailed, taxonomic research and comparative biology studies have been carried out on our polytypic species (with more than one "subspecies") so far, so bird watchers here should be careful about doing IDs just to species level. Late Humayun Abdulali was getting to grips with these slight but constant differences in geographically separated (or even not so!) populations of cryptic or sibling species-complexes and told me at his flat (in Bandra, Bombay) last year that "the fun begins and ends with subspecies." The habitat type is important in correctly placing these difficult species, as well as their distinct calls and song. Gole is right when he points out that none of the "text books" (for us bird students?) mention the habit of a cocked tail of *M. erythroptera*. This is the basic fault of these "general summaries" that such handbooks and guides veritably are. G.M. Henry, however, wrote of *M. ceylonensis* (which is distinct from *affinis*, as Abdulali, 1978, *Spolia Zeylanica*, 32: 141-142 had correctly noted) in his A GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF CEYLON (p. 92; which book had introduced me to bird watching in 1955), that "While walking, or singing, it often carries the tail elevated." Henry's summaries, like those of Whistler in his POPULAR HANDBOOK OF INDIAN BIRDS (1928) are much better, in my opinion, than those of others (see Sâlim Ali's fine review of Henry's book in *JBNHS* 53: 451-453; 1956).

I have discussed, in some detail, in my OPEN LETTER TO THE EDITORS OF *BUCEROS* (2002, Humea, field ornithology, # 3, pp. 1-29, map) about our birds' **species limits** and which I am now re-analysing, carefully, using my systematic entomology training (which involved very detailed comparisons, using a microscope and doing dissections of genitalia and other insect body parts)—but very little measurement.

Bird IDs are not at all easy, as the experienced senior Prakash Gole has admitted, so please try and pin your polytypic birds down to the "subspecies," if you can, so we can be reasonably certain of which bird species you really saw. The PICTORIAL GUIDE and FIELD GUIDE do illustrate a few distinct "races" separately, but you will have to also consult the INDIAN HANDBOOK and NEW FAUNA for real help. That is why I appeal to all bird watchers not to depend on Manakadan and Pittie but to please continue using the INDIAN HANDBOOK and NEW SYNOPSIS and "have fun with subspecies" in the field, playing detective, like the great bird diagnostician, late Humayun Abdulali, had dinned into my head before he flew away into the heavens last year.



A Visit to Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary and Molem National Park Goa

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Natural beauty of Goa with beautiful golden beaches, and decorated the offshore with an alluring forest eco-system on arrival at Panaji I smelled the existence of the natural forest and it was an opportunity for me to survey the ecosystem of the North Konkan region.

A preliminary discussion with Mr. C. Achalender Reddy, Director, Wildlife and Eco-tourism, Government of Goa and Mr. Francis Lourdes Coelho, Assistant Conservator enabled me to prepare well for making a general survey of the Park.

The Park is 57 km from Panaji, it takes one and half hour drive on National Highway No 4. At Molem we gathered considerable information from the well-maintained Interpretation Centre. We entered the National Park around 8.30 in the morning along with a local guide, binoculars and a Pictorial Guide (Ali & Ripley, 1995). The Molem National Park is situated in the central part of Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary. This area is about 107 km² while Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary is about 133 km². Both the National Park and the Wildlife Sanctuary encompass an area about 240 km² including the rich forest from moist deciduous to evergreen forest types rolling down from the highest ridges of the Western Ghats to the foothills.

The understorey of the forest is very dense. The Sanctuary and National Park largely consists of moist deciduous semi-evergreen and evergreen forest, where the dominant species in the canopy is *Terminalia*. Some of the important tree species are *Hopea* sp, *Missua* (ironwood), *Colophyllum* sp, *Cinnamomum*, *Myrsine*, *Grewia* sp, *Artocarpus* sp. Giant climber/lianas drape the trees. *Entada pursaetha* and *Gnetum* which is a climbing Gymnosperm are found here. Canes too occur frequently and as part of the ground flora some of the medicinal plants are *Abrus precatorius*, *Costus* species, *Rouwolfia serpentina*.

Among the mammalian species Gaur (*Bos gaurus*) is the largest herbivore. According to the Goa forest department the population of the Gaur is about 1500-1600 and perhaps owing to predominance in number, this has been declared as "state animal" by the State Government. Unfortunately we could not see the animal though we heard the call inside the jungle. Among other mammalian species of the forest are panther (*Panthera pardus*), jungle cat (*Felis chaus*), leopard cat (*Felis bengalensis*), lesser Indian civet (*Viverricula indica*), sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*), slender loris (*Loris tardigradus*), flying fox (*Pteropus giganteus*) etc.

We traversed over 5 km within the Molem National Park for bird watching and recorded about 56 bird species. The forest department has built a watch tower and an artificial dyke to create a water hole. I could see a number of birds and many of them were new to me eg. fairy blue bird (*Irena puella*), plain collared or Nilgiri flowerpecker (*Dicaeum concolor*), speckled piculet (*Picumnus innominatus*).

In the afternoon we went to the Range Forest Officer Mr. P.D. Salelkar to discuss the conservation of the area. It appears that the noise pollution is the greatest problem. The National Highway No. 4 passes through the Sanctuary and the South Central Railway crosses 36 km in the Sanctuary and

National Park and the noise caused by passing heavy vehicles and trains has hindered free movement of the animals, and it is a constant source of disturbance to the animals.

Poaching pressure, which was very high in this area earlier seems to have reduced drastically according to forest officials. The local population does not seem to depend much on forest wood as LPG is easily available. Increasing literacy has meant that educated families do not want to use firewood. Perhaps possessing LPG is a status symbol.

There are about 285 human inhabitants in the National Park. The government is concerned about displacing them and it has allocated Rs 1.5 crores in the last financial year for their rehabilitations. Interestingly the inhabitants are also showing some interest in moving out of the sanctuary and national park. The RFO has received only one complaint of paddy field destruction by gaur in the last three years. The efforts of the government of Goa are certainly laudable as far as wildlife conservation is concerned. There is a lack of documentation of the biodiversity. It is important to map and evaluate the biodiversity values of the area. The Goan government plan to introduce eco-tourism in the area, and doing so without a proper study, may be counter-productive.

Acknowledgement

I pay my sincere thanks to Mr. C Achalender Reddy, Director, Wildlife and eco-tourism, Dr. Francis Lourdes Coelho, Assistant conservator of forest, Wildlife and eco-tourism wing, Mr. P. D. Salelkar, Range Forest Officer Wildlife and Eco-tourism, Government of Goa for giving me all possible help.

Table. Check list of the birds of Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary and Molem National Park, Goa.

Common name	Scientific name
Family: Ardeidae	
1. Pond heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
Family: Accipitridae	
2. Pariah kite	<i>Milvus migrans govinda</i>
3. Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
4. Brahmini kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
5. Indian white backed vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>
6. Crested serpent eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>
Family: Charadriidae	
7. Redwattled lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
8. Marsh sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>
Family: Columbidae	
9. Spotted dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>
Family: Psittacidae	
10. Bluewinged parakeet	<i>Psittacula columboides</i>
11. Roseringed parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
Family: Apodidae	
12. Indian edible-nest swiftlet	<i>Collocalia unicolor</i>
13. House swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
Family: Alcedinidae	
14. Common kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
15. White breasted kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
Family: Meropidae	
16. Chestnut headed bee eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>

17. Green bee eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
Family: Bucerotidae	
18. Malabar grey hornbill	<i>Tockus griseus</i>
Family: Capitonidae	
19. Large green barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>
Family: Picidae	
20. Speckled piculet	<i>Picumnus innominatus</i>
21. Lesser goldenbacked woodpecker	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>
22. Heartspotted woodpecker	<i>Hemicircus canente</i>
23. Pigmy woodpecker	<i>Picoides nanus</i>
Family: Hirundinidae	
24. Wiretailed swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>
25. Red rumped swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>
Family: Oriolidae	
26. Black headed oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>
27. Golden oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>
Family: Dicruridae	
28. Bronzed drongo	<i>Dicrurus aeneus</i>
29. Greater racket tailed drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>
Family: Corvidae	
30. Indian tree pie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>
31. Jungle crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>
Family: Campephagidae	
32. Large cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina novaehollandiae</i>
Family: Irenidae	
33. Fairy blue bird	<i>Irena puella</i>
34. Common lora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
35. Gold mantled chloropsis	<i>Chloropsis cochinchinensis</i>

Family: Pycnonotidae

36. Ruby throated yellow bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus melanicterus</i>
37. Redvented bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
38. Black bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes madagascariensis</i>
39. Yellow browed bulbu	<i>Hypsipetes indicus</i>
40. Red whiskered bulbi	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>

Family: Muscicapidae

41. Spotted babbler	<i>Pellorneum ruficeps</i>
42. Quaker babbler	<i>Alcippe poiocephala</i>
43. Jungle babbler	<i>Turdoides striatus</i>
44. Brown breasted flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa parva</i>
45. Greenish leaf warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>
46. Magpie robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
47. Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>

Family: Sittidae

48. Velvet fronted nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>
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Family: Motacillidae

49. Forest wagtail	<i>Motacilla indica</i>
50. Large pied wagtail	<i>Motacilla maderaspatensis</i>
51. Grey wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>

Family: Dicaeidae

52. Tickells flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>
53. Plain coloured flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum concolor</i>

Family: Nectariniidae

54. Purple rumped sunbird	<i>Nectarinia zeylonica</i>
55. Purple sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>

Family: Ploceidae

56. Yellow throated sparrow	<i>Petronia xanthocollis</i>
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REVIEW

PELICANS AND PEOPLE - THE TWO TIER VILLAGE OF KOKKARE, BELLUR, KARNATAKA By K. MANU & SARA JOLLY

(Kalpavriksh and International Institute of Environment and Development)

A case study which is part of a global project called Evaluating Eden, sponsored and coordinated by the International Institute of Environment & Development, London; The South Asia Regional Review of Community Involvement in Conservation which was part of this global project was coordinated by members of the Environmental Action group.

Kalpavriksh : Ashish Kothari, Neema Pathak & Farhad Vania

This excellent booklet is the work of the Environment Research & Action Group called Kalpavriksh – a group interested in studying the relationship between local communities and wildlife management. The present study is a careful description of the interaction between the villagers and the pelicans and storks which occupy their trees every year from December to June.

The history of the mutual dependence between these birds who have lived and bred in the tree tops for centuries (apparently) and the villagers who have lived below on the ground, makes an extraordinary story. The village is some distance from the nearest water bodies, necessary for these fish-eating species – why did they choose this particular village? On their side, the human population not only tolerates them, they welcome them. In practical, material terms the birds' droppings are valuable manure for the farmers, improving the quality and quantity of their crops. There is also, of course, the belief that the birds bring good luck to the village – it is recalled that on the few times the birds failed

to appear, the village suffered – once from drought and once from unexplained series of murders.

The story of Kokkare Bellur has been known to birders ever since 1976 when S. G. Neginhal "discovered it". There are some unusual points about it – as when the whole village had to shift its location and settle a few kilometers away, the birds too decided to move with them; and why do they remain undisturbed by the crackers and noise during festivals and weddings? Even without that tinge of superstition it is obvious that the villagers have a strong feeling of protective affection for the birds. The village panchayat will take strong steps to punish anyone who attempts to disturb them. Among other things, young people rescue the chicks which fall out of their nests, rear them and release them into the wild.

But already there are signs of trouble. As mud of this thatch houses are replaced by brick and tiles, the search for wood grows desperate, and it is difficult to save the large, mature trees which are homes to the birds, from being cut down. The Mysore Amateur Naturalists are addressing such problems with imagination and determination. As with everything in today's world, many of the answers seem to be with money. Protection for a tree can be bought with money. While the Forest Department is willing to pay some protection money in special cases, it is never enough.

Meanwhile, we cannot applaud enough the efforts of the Mysore Amateur Naturalists.

There are two Appendices, both valuable. One relates to the compensation paid by the Forest Department to the villagers for protecting (not cutting down) trees on which the pelicans nest. The second is a list of the 141 species of birds found in Kokkare Bellur with their local, common, and scientific names, their status, including the reference number from the famous Salim Ali/Ripley Handbook.

CORRESPONDENCE

COOTS FOLLOW THE MALLARDS. AAMIR ALI, 14, *che de la Tourella*, 1209 Geneva

Sixteen years ago I wrote an account of how Mallards had arrived on the lake of Champex (Newsletter Vol. XXVI Nos. 9-10, Sept-Oct. 1986 and Vol. XXVIII, Nos 3-4, Mar-April 1988)

Champex is a resort in the Valais Alps, at about 1500 m. with a small lake; that you can walk round in half an hour. There is one sizable bed of reeds and a couple of very small patches. We have been regular visitors to Champex since the end of the 60s and never saw any water fowl in it until 1985. A mallard couple nested there that year and brought up three ducklings. Next year there were several couples nesting; and since then the total population seemed to peak at about 50, including youngsters, and then come down to a more reasonable 25-30.

Once, about 1991, a small flock of black-headed gulls landed on the lake, no doubt surprised to find an unexpected patch of water during a flight. They did not stay long.

In summer, 2001 I was surprised to see a lone coot (*Fulica atra*) skulking among the reeds, keeping well away from the mallards who by this time behaved as if they owned the lake. Perhaps the coots had a mate, but I didn't see it. Perhaps it had, like those gulls, arrived accidentally and would soon disappear.

But in summer 2002, it was there again, with a mate and a youngster (cootling?) which, at an uninformed guess, might have been about ten days old. The juvenile was grey rather than black and had no frontal shield of white. I saw the family regularly for a couple of weeks, always in the same area near the reed bed, while the Mallards sailed all over the lake at will. The youngster was never far from at least one parent. It seems that it takes about 8 weeks for the young to become independent.

One day, there was a flock of about 12 mallards, adults and young nearby. A mallard suddenly shot across and attacked the young coot, who fled and dived. The parent coot, presumably the mother, which was a couple of metres away, charged the Mallard ferociously and the Mallard fled. Peace reigned again. The young coot emerged from the reeds into which it had fled.

On the lake of Geneva, hundreds of coots and mallards (and many others) seem to live together in reasonable harmony. Are the mallards of Champex worried that coots are muscling in on their very limited territory? While the mallards were always ready and eager to gather round and entertain tourists by snapping up pieces of bread thrown out for them, the coots remained aloof from these vulgar expressions of greed and of kowtowing to humans.

Will the coots return next year, perhaps with reinforcements? They are a gregarious species and like true immigrants, will no doubt tell their relatives and friends of the pickings to be had in Champex and urge them to come along. No wonder the mallards are suspicious of them.

Coots are common across Euro-Asian continent, and North Africa, in India they are resident as well as winter visitors.

COLLARED SCOPS OWL. SACHIN PALKAR, *Sahyadri Nisarga Mitra*, Near D.B.J. College, Chiplun, District Ratnagiri, Maharashtra

There was a Rain Tree (*Samanea saman*) 30m high in the suburban area Ozarwadi, Chiplun District, Ratnagiri. The owner cut the tree on 8th May 2002. Mr. Mangesh Khair, a resident of Ozarwadi, saw a bird near the fallen tree and immediately contacted me. He also saw another bird flying near it. I immediately visited the place and observed the bird. It was an eight to ten days chick, collared scops owl *Otus bakkamoena* and a parent was seen on the tree. There was a nest in a natural hole in the tree at the height of 10 mtr. The chick came out when the tree fell down. The chick was under the branches of the fallen tree and there were two cockroaches near it. When we approached it the chick looked frightened. I made it drink some glucose water and I told Mangesh to keep a watch on it.

I came back home and prepared a box with the use of two drawers and kept some space for the owl to enter. I reached the place at 2030hrs. with the box and silently watched them. The adult owl called 'wut, wut' and the chick was responding in a low voice. After some time one owl came with a cockroach in its beak and sat on a tree. The owl came near the chick to feed it with the cockroach and flew away. Then I went near it with the box and put the chick in it. After ten minutes the owl came back with another cockroach in its beak, but he could not find the chick. Then the owl called 'wut, wut' and the chick responded from the box instantly. The owl sat on the box and located the chick. After a few minutes the owl carefully entered the box. After some time it came out and sat on the box and flew away. After a few minutes another owl came, fed the chick and flew away. I picked up the box from the fallen tree and fixed it on a Jackfruit tree at a height of 5 to 6 mtrs.

Again the owls came, with a house lizard on the fallen tree at the place where I had kept the box. To could not find the box there, so the owl started calling 'wut, wut' and flying here and there. Soon they heard the response of their chick and approached the jackfruit tree. They took rounds around the box and slowly sat on the box looking here and there. After some time it entered the box. Later both owls visited the box alternately for feeding the chick.

For a few days I visited the place every evening. The owls accepted the nest and were seen visiting to feed the chick. An adult owl was seen in the box with its chick in daytime. I observed the chick after ten days and it had feathers. On 30th May the chick flew away. After the owl left, the box was used by a Magpie robin *Copsychus saularis* for its nest. It laid five eggs in the box on 4th, 5th and 8th June. After a month these chicks flew away.

ORIENTAL IBIS. A. RAJARAM, C2, 29, 4th Seaward Road, Valmiki Nagar, Thiruvannamipur, Chennai 600 041.

Two birds with unusual breeding colouration were sighted by me in June this year (2002) and by friend Ramanan in May, 1999. The bird has a red patch on the hind-neck. It has small red wart like spots below the main patch on either side indicating perhaps the possibility that it will spread a further cm or so. When I visited Ranganthitoo in June it was 6 pm and I couldn't

get time to see if there were other birds with the same colouration. The Handbook doesn't mention this feature in the bird nor have I noticed it elsewhere in Southern India. I would like to hear from readers if they have come across such a shiny red patch on the Oriental Ibis elsewhere. Birdwatchers visiting Ranganthittoo over the years might have noticed this feature in breeding ibises there.

Breeding colouration is found to vary significantly. Great comorants in southern India usually don't develop the white thigh patches they develop in northern India. Gurusami has written about differences in colouration of breeding birds both in Blackbuck and the Newsletter for Birdwatchers.

It would be worthwhile to keep a lookout for breeding birds with such colouration; they can indicate family relationships and if seen in different places, perhaps their local migrations.

COFFEE ESTATES AND BIRDS. K.R. SETHNA, *Yellikodigi Estate, Aldur P.O. 577111, Chikmagalur dist., Karnataka*

Coffee estates can be good or bad for birds depending on the coffee estates. Coffee estates which use lots of chemicals and pesticides can be very harmful to birds while estates which are organically cultivated or those which use very little chemicals and pesticides can be very beneficial.

Unfortunately there are hardly any coffee estates which are cultivated only organically. My coffee estate is the only truly organically cultivated estate in the district. Naturally, I have an abundance of bird life in my estate. Another factor which is also not very helpful to birds are estates where all or most of the indigenous shade trees are removed for financial gain and the areas are planted with Silver oak (*Grevila robusta*) trees. This in no way helps birdlife. There are estates which use a limited amount of chemicals but still have different varieties of indigenous trees like different kinds of ficus and other fruit bearing trees and these estates are good for birds and have a good variety of them.

Estates which use large quantities of pesticides and other chemicals are responsible for a large number of deaths among fruit eating and insectivorous birds. Birds act as natural enemies against insects and the larger number of birds in an estate would mean less insect problems.

In my organically cultivated estate I have a large variety of bird life. I have raptors, fruit eating birds and large number of insectivorous birds. Some of the raptors I have seen in my estate are - the brown wood owl, barn owl, crested hawk eagle, shikra and many others. Among fruit eating birds - the green barbet, coppersmith, rose-ringed parakeets, blossom headed parakeets, lorikeets, golden orioles, green pigeon, hill mynas, koels and many other kinds. Among insectivorous birds are pitta, scarlet minivets, are golden backed wood peckers, grey jungle fowl, black drongos, racket tailed drongos. The Indian tree pie, gold fronted choloropsis, paradise flycatchers, white cheeked bulbuls, red whiskered bulbuls, redvented bulbuls, yellow cheeked tits, magpie robins, white breasted ground thrush, Tickell's blue flycatchers, verditer flycatchers and many more. I have counted over 80 different birds and I feel there must be many more. All these in only an area of 150 acres!

GUDAVI BIRD SANCTUARY. SHREEPAD HEGDE, *Adkalli - Kansur, Sirsi - Kanara, Pin 581 340*

During the monsoon months the magnificent Malenadu forest with the Gudavi Bird Sanctuary attracts thousands birds from far and near, with a waterspread of nearly 30 hectares in a total area of 73-68 hectares. It is located in an absolutely pollution free environment of Gudavi Village with its paddy fields, pineapple and areca gardens as well as an imposing deciduous forest the place is noted for. This bird sanctuary - one among the five such sanctuaries for bird lovers. Located in Shimoga district Gudavi village is really a 'Birders' Paradise.

During 1993 a total of 191 bird species was recorded by a study team of birdwatchers. Of these 63 species were totally or partially aquatic. 10 such species and 3 others breed there in and around the sanctuary. On 24th April, 2002 I joined the North Karnataka Birders Network Study Team to observe the birds of the sanctuary. I recorded 32 species of birds of which three were breeding in the heronry. A total of 8000 birds could be seen and in all probability this number could be more where the birds which had flown out for foraging returned as dusk fell. Among the important species observed were white ibis, egrets- both little and median, spoonbill, cormorant, coot, night heron, Indian shag, darter, little grebe etc. with my binoculars I could spot darter squabs. This was a spectacular view of the darters active nest. The vegetation was made up of fine Karcar, *Kirganelia reticulata*, *Syzguim cumini* *vitex leucoxylog*, *Phyllanthus* sp. etc.

With the tanks full of impounded water, the number of birds visiting the sanctuary peaks during the monsoon. The tanks go dry during summer. Nesting commences with the onset of monsoon which lasts from June to November. Egrets, cormorants, darters and purple herons are the first to start nesting in June and is followed by white ibis and night herons in July. Spoonbills take their turn in September. By the end of November all nesting activity ends and the birds abandon the heronry. In terms of distribution, conservation status etc. of Indian heronries the Gudavi Bird Sanctuary has a prominent position and is the second important place in Karnataka.

Main birds in Gudavi : White ibis, Indian shag (cormorant), little cormorant, darters, grey heron, pond heron, purple heron, night heron, all types of egrets, spoonbill, lesser whistling teal, cotton teal, blue winged teal, coot, pheasant tailed jacana, red wattled lapwing, purple moorhen, little ringed plover, marsh sand piper, pin tail, white breasted water hen, common sand piper and river tern.

Main Facilities at Gudavi : Two watch towers, two tiled roofs, one thatched parabola, small canteen, drinking water, photographic projection etc., with no halting facilities.

How to reach : Sirsi 57 kms. Sorab town is 15 kms. Sagar is the nearest Railway station 47 kms. Mangalore Airport is the nearest airport 270 kms. From Bangalore one has to reach Shimoga, Sorab then Gudavi by bus. There are no frequent bus facilities from Sorab to Gudavi.

NESTING OF BLACK-BELLIED TERN. K.V. ELDOSE, C. SUSANTH KUMAR AND K. RAFAEEK, *Prakriti, Indira Nagar, Peroorkada P.O., Thiruvananthapuram 695 005.*

Black bellied tern *Sterna acuticauda* is a medium sized deeply fork-tailed tern. Smaller and slimmer than the river tern - *Sterna*

aurantia, with orange bill in all plumages. Adult breeding birds have a grey upper breast and chin, black crown, belly and tail coverts. The white tail has long outer feathers. The wings are greyish white all over. Adult non breeding and immature birds have white under parts with varying amount of black speckles and streaked black crown. According to the Asian Water Fowl Census, this tern is considered a threatened species.

The bird is very little known in Kerala. A few sight records are mentioned by Prof. K.K. Neelakantan in his book 'A Book of Kerala Birds'. Mainly confined to the river bed of Bharathapuzha there is only single sighting from kole wetlands in Thrissur district. The breeding behaviour was observed in Pallam in 1993 at the same riverbed. Later in 1996, the same display and mobbing behaviour was seen at Shendurney wildlife sanctuary, Kollam district.

Breeding of the black-bellied tern was recorded in Kerala on 21-01-02 at Mallurkadavu near Kuttipuram at Bharathapuzha river by the first author. He saw the adult birds dipping in water to moisturise the eggs in the nest. Two nests were found that day, one of which contained 3 eggs, the other having 2 chicks.

On 2nd February 2002, the second and third authors with Mr. S. Rajeevan visited the nesting place and found 5 nests. All the nests had 3 eggs each. One dead chick was found near the water. Later they found a live chick of 1-2 days old near the shade of a small grass clump. All the 13 adult birds were in full breeding plumage. The nests were located 6-12m away from each other and at a height of 25-30 cm from the water surface. The size of eggs and nest were measured from photographs. Average size of eggs 28mm x 22mm. The diameter of the nest was 50 mm. The nest was a typical tern nest without any lining inside, just a plain scrape on the loose sand. The shape of the egg was a broad oval very slightly compressed at the smaller end. The colour of the eggs was well matched with the surroundings speckled and blotched all over the greyish brown. The chick was lying flat on the sand with head stretched. It was very difficult to find the chick in these surroundings.

On 2nd February, when approaching the nesting area, the birds flew frantically overhead of the investigators and calling repeatedly. The birds were chasing away Brahminy kites and crows. One or two pairs still engaged in a courtship display. One bird with a fish (about 2" long) appeared. A second bird chased the other. After some fine display of aerobatics, the second one approached the other, face to face, then while hovering, the bird exchanged the fish to the other. This repeated a few times. Then one of them swallowed the fish in mid-air.

Feeding the incubating adult bird at the nest was also observed. During sunny hours the adult birds were seen more at the nest shading the eggs. Occasionally it went to the water and dipped itself to beat the heat of sun to the eggs. The third author has documented some of the activities in film.

On 6th February 2002, Mr. R. Jayaprakash, Mr. R. Murukesh and the second author visited the nesting site and observed the activities. Only one nest had eggs while all others had hatched. Chicks of different stages were observed (varying from more than one week to a few days). Chicks were being fed with fish.

On 26th February 2002, the second and third authors along with Mohan Nilambur and K.A. Kishore visited the area. By now the birds had left the breeding site. Only a pair of adults were seen high up in the sky. We presume that the juvenile birds left the nesting site with adults.

Now we can confirm that this is the first breeding record of the bird from Kerala

Acknowledgment

We are thankful to Mr. S. Rajeevan, R. Jayaprakash, K.A. Kishore, Mohan Nilambur and R. Murukesh members of Warblers and Waders, Thiruvananthapuram for full field support and encouragement.

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OPENBILLED STORK IN KHERI DIST., UTTARA PRADESH,
KRISHNA KUMAR MISHRA, No. 77, Shiv Colony, Canal Road,
Lakhimpur-Kheri 262701.

I had heard that for the past two hundred years these birds arrive here for breeding, and I decided to study their breeding behaviour as well as the features of the habitat where they nested. I found that the nesting took place in a ten hectare plot in Sareli village of Mohammadi Tahseel. I learnt that during the British Raj the village was under the ownership of Jamedar Baldev Prasad, and he strictly protected the birds which numbered as many as 2000 occasionally.

The habitat of Sareli village consists of wet grasslands, agricultural lands, lakes, ponds and reservoirs. In the breeding season from June to September these birds form flocks ranging from 10 to 50 birds of both sexes. In July 2001 there were as many as 241 nests and each nest contained 4 to 5 eggs. Usually the nesting takes place on two sides of the village, but surprisingly in the year 2000 nests were made on only one side of the village. This was because at one stretch all the nesting trees were destroyed due to excessive guano (bird droppings) which are acidic owing to uric acid content.

Here are my findings : In 1999 there were 210 nests, in 2000 there were 195 and in 2001 there were 241 nests. The favoured trees were peepal, neem, tamarind, bamboos and karanj (*Pongamia pinnata*). There were only 4 nests on eucalyptus trees. During the nest building stage the birds were displaying and mating on the nests. The nests were made from the twigs of peepal, bamboo, babul and eucalyptus. The nests were lined with green eucalyptus leaves and it is believed that the aroma of these leaves protects the eggs and the young from insects. But the birds are helpless when the nests are attacked by snakes. In Aug 2001 I saw a rat snake (*Zamenis mucosus*) enter a nest and gobble up all the five eggs.

The young of the open-billed storks are nidicolous and entirely dependent on the parents during their initial days though the eyes seem to be open at birth.

NEW NESTING COLONY OF GREY HERONS (*ARDEA CINEREA*) IN HASSAN DISTRICT, KARNATAKA.

AMEEN AHMED, *Ghouse Buildings, Horpet Main Road, Tumkur 572 101, Karnataka, India.*

A new nesting colony of grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*) has been recorded for the first time by Ameen Ahmed and Guru Prasad.T.V., members of Wildlife Aware Nature Club (WANC), Tumkur in March 2002. The birds have been nesting on 2 trees within Sannenahalli, a small village in the remote corner of south interior Karnataka. This village located in Gandasi hobli of Hassan district, is about 17 km from Tiptur town (Tumkur district) and approximately the same distance away from Arasikere town (Hassan district). Agriculture is the main occupation of these villagers.

Geographical co-ordinates : Approximately 76°24' E 13° 12' N

Approach from Bangalore : To Tumkur (70 km) then to Tiptur (75km) on Bangalore-Shimoga-Honnavar National Highway. From there travel 9 km south on Hassan road. Deviate west 3 km to Bennenahalli and travel 3 km more to Gurugadahalli. From there Shivara village is 1 ½ km and finally Sannenahalli is 1 km.

Altitude : 830 metres above mean sea level.

Brief details : The birds have been breeding here for the past 5 years, claim the villagers, who also say that their numbers have increased of late. They attribute this rise to the protection afforded by them. The villagers even cite instances where they have prevented people from nearby Tiptur town and Bennenahalli village from poaching these birds. They say although the birds do not help them, they do no harm either. They protect the birds because they are beautiful.

Number of trees and nests : The grey herons are breeding on 2 Peepal trees. While on one tree we counted 36 nests, the other tree had 21 nests.

Feeding : These birds use wetlands surrounding the village for their feeding purpose. In fact the trees on which the birds nest are adjacent to the village tank (man-made wetland). Since this tank dries up in summer the birds also are reported to feed in the nearby Arasikere tank, a big perennial tank that is also home to many other waterfowl including migratory ones.

Ownership of trees : The trees are located on land belonging to the local Anjanaya Temple Trust.

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Other birds : The villagers say apart from grey herons, even little cormorants known as "Neeru Kaage" (water crows in Kannada) come here in December - January to roost. But they supposedly do not breed. During the half hour stay in the village we could also see: Golden oriole, Indian tree pie, house sparrow, pariah kite, house martin and whiteheaded babbler.

UNUSUAL SIGHTING OF PAINTED STORKS AT SINGADHAHALLI KERE CHIKKANAYAKANAHALLI TALUK OF TUMKUR DISTRICT. HARISH R. BHAT, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore 560 012.

On 25th July 2002, I had been to Chikkanayakanahalli taluk of Tumkur district in Karnataka. I visited a perennial tank called Singadhahalli Kere. Though the tank was huge the water level was low due to which many sheep and cattle were grazing on the edges of the tank. At one end of the tank, I could see a big colony of 37 painted storks! It was indeed a marvellous scene to see painted storks in this unusual season! There were about 9 young painted storks with grey colour all over the body, lacking the attractive colours on their head and wings. Their presence answered my curiosity of 'where do the painted storks go after they breed?' Probably, they do not go too far. Instead they locally migrate with their young ones and do come back to the same breeding spots during January and May every year. Along with the painted storks I could also see 10 grey herons, 1 open billed stork, 2 black ibis, 10 little cormorants and 15 egrets. There were 15 unidentified ducks paddling near the edge. The tank proved to be rich with birds life even during the dry season.

INFORMATION ON RAPTORS REQUIRED. GURU PRASAD T.V, *Wildlife Aware Nature Club, "Sri Guru Krupa", 9th Cross, Ashok Nagar, Tumkur -572103. Karnataka. Tel: +91 816 254475 Fax: +91-816-275430 Email: vultures@rediffmail.com/guru_tumkur@hotmail.com.*

Asian Raptor Research Conservation Network, JAPAN has launched two Projects:

Asian Raptor Migration & Ecology of Indian Black Eagle. In this context a discussion was held at Fraser hills, Malaysia for which I was invited from India and was requested to coordinate for the above two projects in India.

Anyone who is working on the above or who is interested to involve in these projects can contact me at the above mentioned address. The contributor would be duly acknowledged in this endeavour.

Cover: Plain Prinia (*Prinia inornata*). This sand coloured inornate warbler frequents cultivated paddy and wheat fields and is also partial to long grass and bushes. It makes a curious snapping noise in flight. The bird clammers about the stems, with an awkward flicking movement of its tail. It also flits, creeps and hops erratically in the undergrowth. It sings a loud jingling wheezy song, that often suggests the shaking of a bunch of keys at a distance.

Photo : S. Shreyas



Newsletter for Birdwatchers



The Annual Gathering

The next Annual Gathering of subscribers and supporters of the Newsletter for Birdwatchers will be held on Sunday, the 19th January 2003, at Dodda Gubbi, Bangalore

for further details and registration contact

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